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THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

A Modern Defense of the
Christian Religion

BY THE REVEREND
FLOYD E. HAMILTON, A.B., B.D., TH.M.

Revised and Enlarged Edition



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FIRST EDITION

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To The
Rev. Arthur J. Marbet
My Dear Friend and Father in the Faith
This Book is Affectionately Dedicated

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PREFACE

During the author's first year in a state university, he passed through the experience of losing faith in the Bible, in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and even in a personal God. At the end of the year there seemed little in life worth working for, and the author dropped out of college for four years, drifting aimlessly with the current of life. At the end of that time the man to whom this book is dedicated came in contact with the author and led him through a chain of reasoning which resulted in the conviction that God *did* live, that Jesus Christ *was* the Eternal Son of God, and that the Bible *was* God's Word.

As a result of that conviction, the author gave his heart to Christ and dedicated his life to Christian service. The present book has been written with this experience in mind and has been an attempt to present argument which the author feels would have been convincing to him during the time when the foundations of his faith were crumbling away.

The immediate occasion which brought forth this book was the necessity of finding a book suitable for use in college classes with students who had little or no familiarity with theological terms and controversies but who were encountering doubts and difficulties as they came into contact with modern knowledge. In examining a number of books in order to find one which would be particularly suitable for this purpose, the author came upon a number of difficulties. In the first place, many of the standard books of this kind either presupposed too much knowledge on the part of the reader and used too technical language or, in an attempt to cover all the logical phases of the subject, gave the material in too much of an outline form to make the argument convincing to a person who had real doubts concerning the points in question.

Further, most of the standard books on the subject covered phases which were not vital points of controversy at present and neglected other phases which offer real problems to the intelligent thinker of

today. A third difficulty was the fact that, while many excellent books dealt with modern phases of the subject, such as evolution, archaeological discoveries which support the historicity of the Bible, and the new evidence on the higher criticism of the Old and New Testaments, there seemed to be almost no book which covered the *whole* field from the modern point of view and still gave enough of the evidence and argument to each separate line to convince the reader who was not already persuaded of the point in question. As a result of these difficulties in finding a suitable book, the author at last decided to prepare one which could be used not only in the classroom but by the general public. After using this book in mimeographed form in his college classes for two years, the author feels that it is proving to be a real help to the students and is encouraged to put it in a form in which it may be serviceable to others as well as students.

In its preparation the author has had in mind principally the purpose of adapting it for use by persons who have intelligent doubts about the truth of Christianity, but who have little or no technical knowledge or training to fit them to make a direct investigation of the evidence in support of Christianity for themselves. To accomplish this purpose, he has tried to make the material as non-technical as possible, to define all the technical terms as soon as they are used, and to treat each subject as though the reader were studying it for the first time, without putting the material in a puerile form. Because of this non-technical method of treatment, the book should prove useful to a number of classes of people.

First, it should be of use to college students, both as a textbook in the Bible Department and as a resource for the student who is finding doubts about the validity of the Christian religion arising in his mind. Second, it should be of assistance to Sunday School teachers and other Christian workers who have not had a technical, theological education. Third, it should help pastors who desire a book defending Christianity to place in the hands of young people and others who are meeting doubts in their Christian life as they come in contact with the anti-Christian attitude prevalent in many educational institutions and in the world at large. Fourth, it should be of assistance to sincere Christians in our churches who often find themselves at a loss for arguments with which to defend their faith against the flood of modern anti-Christian

literature which is being published at the present time.

The treatment of the subject matter and a large proportion of the argumentation are original with the author, though most of the facts are common property among Christian thinkers. In the various technical fields, such as Old Testament criticism, the author does not claim to be a firsthand authority, and though the best books in every line have been consulted in the preparation of the present volume, a great deal of the evidence from scientific lines here presented is derived from works of authorities in those areas. Credit is given wherever possible.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, the late Professor of Semitic Languages in Princeton Theological Seminary, for his assistance in revising the facts in Chapter XIII, "The Historical and Literary Criticism of the Old Testament," and for permission to use this noted scholar's arguments on the "Names of the Kings," in Chapter X, and on "Foreign Words in the Old Testament," in Chapter XIII. Thanks are also rendered to Dr. William Park Armstrong, the late Professor of New Testament in Princeton Theological Seminary, for his assistance in revising the facts in Chapter XIV, "The Historical and Literary Criticism of the New Testament." Special thanks are due to the late Dr. William Brenton Greene, Jr., Professor of Apologetics in Princeton Theological Seminary, for his assistance in revising and criticizing the whole book. The author wishes particularly to thank the Rev. George G. Horn for invaluable aid in correcting the proof and preparing the index.

It is hoped that the rather complete index will render the book more useful and make its material easily accessible for quick reference.

F. E. H.

Pyongyang, Korea

PREFACE TO THE THIRD REVISED EDITION

The continued use of *The Basis of Christian Faith* as a textbook has necessitated a new edition. Before preparing the new edition it has seemed wise to make a thorough revision of the book. Those who have used it in the past will find that it is considerably enlarged and changed in various parts. The newer apologetics of the last few years has affected my thinking extensively, and these changes are incorporated in Chapter I and Chapter III. The new section on materialism in Chapter II takes into account recent discoveries in atomic energy. The principal change in Chapter IV is a new section which brings the section on genetics up to date. The position I have taken against evolution, however, remains unaltered by the recent discoveries in biology and genetics, but rather is strengthened. Notice especially the explanation of the first chapter of Genesis, found at the end of Chapter IV. There are extensive additions in the Selected Bibliography. A note on "form criticism" has been added to Chapter XIV.

It is the earnest hope of the author that the new revised edition may continue to be used to bring those young people whose faith in Christianity has been undermined by a non-Christian educational system back to a living faith in Christ as Saviour, and in the Bible as the Word of God.

F. E. H.

Philadelphia, Pa.
February 1946

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH REVISED EDITION

The continued use of *The Basis of Christian Faith* as a textbook, and its success in reaching individuals who have made shipwreck of their faith, indicates that there is a real need for a book of this kind. Over fifty thousand copies have been sold since it was first published in 1927. At the request of the publishers, and with the encouragement of Dr. Frank Gaebelin, Headmaster of the Stony Brook School, Stony Brook, Long Island, who has used it as a textbook since it was first published, the book has been completely rewritten.

This has necessitated extensive reading and investigation in the many fields covered by the subjects included in the book. The criticism of authorities in the different lines has been most helpful. The re-writing of the book has been interesting and instructive.

Three subjects have particularly caused much difficulty. The first has been the question of evolution discussed in Chapter IV. The scientific advances of the past quarter of a century had to be assessed, and the evidence for and against evolution had to be carefully weighed. As will be seen in that chapter, the general conclusion previously reached remains unchanged. The evidence against evolution presented by biology and genetics is far stronger than I had previously understood. The section on geology has been extensively revised. It is hoped that this will satisfy those critics of previous sections who urged its revision.

The second subject that demanded revision was that of materialism. The development of nuclear physics, the knowledge of astrophysics, and space science all demanded investigation and restudy. Special thanks are due to Professor G. O. Spencer, of the Physics Department of Troy State College, Troy, Alabama, for his valuable assistance in checking facts and in making suggestions.

The third subject that has caused great difficulty has been basic to the whole method of apologetics used in this book. The method previously followed (and followed again in this revision) may be called

the old Princeton method of apologetics used by the great Princeton theologians of the past century and a half. The giants of the theological world, like Charles Hodge, Benjamin B. Warfield, Francis L. Patton, William Brenton Greene, Jr., and J. Gresham Machen, all used it in their writing and lectures. This method, briefly, is to present evidence and arguments from all different lines of thought in an attempt to show that God exists, that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the burden of inferential proof is so great that there is no excuse for an unbeliever to reject Christianity. The method has been successful in winning souls for Christ in the past; countless wanderers in the deserts of philosophy, psychology, and science have been brought to a living faith in Christ and the Bible through it. It is unfair to attack the method as being neutral to the facts of the universe. Everyone who has used this method in the past has been an ardent believer in Christ and in the Bible as the Word of God written. That is a basic assumption. It was claimed, moreover, that, in being presented the facts, an unbeliever could understand the arguments and evidence and even attain relative truth before his regeneration. Then the Holy Spirit could use all that as preparation for His sovereign act of bringing regeneration to the person.

During the past thirty-five years the method has been attacked by the "presuppositionalists," led by Dr. Cornelius Van Til, of Westminster Theological Seminary. They have held that it is impossible to prove the existence of God to an unbeliever; that one must *assume* His existence as a basis for argument with an unbeliever, because the unbeliever and the believer have no common ground on which they can meet in argument.

The presuppositionalists are so persuasive in their reasoning that I have been much influenced by their arguments. Before this revision could be undertaken, therefore, I had to come to some definite conclusion regarding the method to be used in the book. It was the fact that the old Princeton method has been blessed by the Lord so greatly in the salvation of souls that led me to conclude that it was the truest and best method. Unbelievers, as a matter of history, *have* been met on so-called "neutral" ground of facts and argument and *have* been brought to the belief in God and the Bible as the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit has used these methods to prepare them for His regenerating act. I have in my files many letters from those who have been brought to

the Lord through reading *The Basis of Christian Faith*. As a matter of fact this old method really *works* in reaching unbelievers with the gospel!

Special thanks are hereby given to Omar Olney, Professor of Biology in Gordon College, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, and to Professor Edwin K. Gedney, Head of the Science Department of Gordon College, for valuable advice in connection with the chapter on evolution.

This edition is sent forth with the hope that it may be used widely in the future as it has been in the past for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

FLOYD E. HAMILTON

Keene, New Hampshire
1963

THE BASIS OF
CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHAPTER I

THE HUMAN REASON

I. INTRODUCTION

In a book setting out to prove the truth of Christianity, it perhaps seems a long distance away from the subject to begin with the human reason. A great many modern psychologists, however, not only deny the existence of a soul in man which is immortal but are agnostic about what is back of the sensations received by our bodies and declare that we have no right to assume a spiritual world behind what we see in the material world around us. We are to deal, say such men, only with human life and its relations with the universe around us. We are told that speculation about a *God* back of the universe is useless.

In all fairness, before rejecting the Christian position regarding such matters, a person ought to know just *what* the Christian beliefs about them really are. Christians who believe that the Bible is the revealed Word of God, written, accept the Bible teaching that God is a Triune God; that He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere in the universe. Such Christians believe that God *created*, i.e., brought into existence out of nothing, the whole universe, including man himself. God did not make the universe out of already existing "stuff," nor did He fashion it out of *Himself*. God spoke, and the universe appeared, but God did not change. There is a difference of opinion among such Christians regarding the *time* God took to create the universe, and also regarding the question as to whether God used a long process by which to produce the universe and man, but they agree that God was the creator of it, and that He preserves and governs it. They believe the Bible teaching that, after being created, man disobeyed God and brought sin upon the whole human race. Since then, all men are naturally rebels against God, seek to ignore Him and try to interpret the universe with God left out. Unless God changes their minds, men are either indifferent

to Him or at enmity with Him. They will not believe that God is the creator, preserver, and controller of the universe. It should be plain, however, that if the Christian position is true, any explanation of the universe which leaves God out can be only partially true, for since God *does* exist, His existence and sovereignty concern every fact in the universe.

The Bible teaches that the mind of man is sinful and corrupt. The seriousness of this corruption cannot be overemphasized. Apart from the grace of God, man wants his own way in everything. No matter how he may try to be unprejudiced, his assumption that there is no God enters all his reasoning processes. It is really impossible for an unbeliever to be neutral in a theological discussion. He will view every argument from his anti-God point of view, and until God's power changes his heart he will disbelieve every argument proving God's existence and sovereignty; the position is usually taken that no amount of argument can *prove* the existence of God. Even after God changes man's heart, sin is not entirely removed but always tends to cause mistakes in reasoning. Before such a change, man will not usually admit that he may be in error when he ignores God, so we cannot expect him to *believe* the arguments in this book, even when he understands them.

If that is so, it may be asked, "What is the use of arguing about such matters?" Well, in so far as our facts and arguments are true, they may be used by the Holy Spirit of God in applying the truth to the hearts of such people and, by changing their hearts, enabling them to believe and accept as well as understand the truth about God, man, and the Bible.

II. THE EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL

At first thought it seems foolish to question the existence of the soul, i.e., the real "self" that governs our actions and decisions every day. Nothing seems more certain to us than that *we* are something apart from our material bodies. We *think*, we *remember*, and we are sure that it is the same "I" today as last year. Yet many psychologists claim that this is a delusion. They say that the material brain cells with the minute nerves that connect them, working together by chemical and electrical processes, constitute all the "self" there is. In the previous generation William James explained the thought processes as follows. Each thought gathers up the memories of the thoughts that have gone before and

turns them over to the following thought, making a "stream of consciousness"¹ which is nothing more than a constantly shifting stream of thoughts, each thought in turn being all the thinker there is. A little later John Dewey declared that "habits formed in process of exercising biological aptitudes are the sole agents of observation, recollection, foresight and judgment: a mind or consciousness or soul in general which performs these operations is a myth. . . . Concrete habits do all the perceiving, recognizing . . . and reasoning that is done."² More recently W. T. Stace of Princeton University summed up the views of many modern psychologists as follows: "But historically, belief in a non-physical conscious mind, has been loaded with religious implications connected with the idea of the immortality of the soul—which is one main reason why the modern mind, as exemplified by the scientific psychologists of our time almost universally rejects it."³

According to such views there is no permanent soul (or spirit) that maintains identity throughout life and, while it grows and develops with experience, nevertheless remains the same "I" all through life. The mind would seem to be like a mist hovering over a swamp, the spray tossed for a moment into the air by a wave, or the sparks thrown off by an emery wheel touched by a knife. As a dynamo generates electricity, so the brain generates thought, and as when the dynamo is quiet no electricity is generated, so when the brain dies thought ceases and the body decays, leaving only a memory in the hearts of others.

Of course, if this be true there can be no immortality, for there is nothing to be immortal except the electrons of the atoms of the dead body. God will be useless to us after death, even if He exists. Personal responsibility will disappear, for there will be no self to be responsible. If we have no immortal soul responsible to God after death, can it matter much how we live in this life?

But is it true? Let us examine this "stream of consciousness," or whatever we may call the continual succession of thoughts occurring in the brain. Suppose I am at a desk typing. I am trying to concentrate, but there are continual distractions. I hear a noisy truck pass on the road close by. A four-engine jet bomber zooms over the house. My wife is vacuuming the rugs or clattering dishes in the kitchen. I am conscious

¹ William James, *Psychology, Briefer Course*, Chap. 9.

² John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 176, 177. Quoted by permission of the publisher, Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

³ W. T. Stace, *Religion and the Modern Mind*, p. 153.

of hunger. My eyes are uncomfortable and tired. But in spite of a hundred distractions I pull my thoughts back to the typing task and force the tired brain to work until I decide to take a rest. Then I dismiss the subject and turn to other lines of thought, or daydream. Here we have a cross section of the "stream of consciousness." What do we find?

First, we notice that it is not a mere stream flowing constantly on and on with no direction or control; it apparently has a director who hastens or slows its flow, changes its direction at will, shuts off one current and turns on another. If there were no active agent controlling the whole process, how could a train of thought once started ever stop? Only external force could stop the process were the brain a mere chemical machine. And when the new thought started, how could *it* stop unless something from without stopped it? Under such conditions the brain would be at the mercy of the most powerful outside stimulus. Unless the brain cells became diseased or died, thought would continue in an unbroken stream, uncontrolled from within the brain, continually at the beck and call of the strongest stimulus entering the brain either from outside or from inside the body.

Now anyone who thinks about his mental processes for a moment knows that this is not the case. It is true that we are more or less under the control of external stimuli, or under the control of habit stimuli from within the brain—some people more than others—especially when those stimuli are unusually strong. When an explosion occurs near the room where we are working, or when a jet bomber flies low over the house, it is almost impossible to keep from going to see what it is all about. But under ordinary circumstances we possess the power to select from the stream of sensations constantly entering the brain the ones to which we will attend. The person who can do this exceptionally well is said to have a strong personality, while the person who is constantly distracted by outside stimuli is said to have a weak personality.

But not only has the mind the power of directing and controlling the flow of thoughts; it also has the power of deliberately starting a *new* train of thought, unrelated to what preceded. From the store of memories it deliberately chooses one which has no connection with what went before. Ordinarily there is a subtle connection between different thoughts and streams of thought, but not always. At will we can select a new thought absolutely unrelated to preceding thoughts, like a housewife who goes to the food closet and selects jam, peas, or baking powder, at will, regardless of any relationship between them. In the

brain only an active, thinking agent could possibly do such a thing as select a chain of thought unrelated to the previous chain of thought. The soul controls the passing thoughts but is not necessarily controlled by them.

In the third place, the mind has the power of conceptual reasoning, which will be discussed later. How could we account for the fact that the mind can take various memories, relate and coördinate them, notice their similarities and differences, recognize the inner meaning of the facts which they denote, and then form conclusions from them which are not simply patchwork ideas pieced together from other ideas but are new, simple ideas discovered by the mind by its own activity, were there not a soul in control? These new ideas are not in any way contained in either the sense perceptions or the memories about which the mind thinks; they are entirely new discoveries of the intellect by its own activity. How can this be accounted for without an active soul or self, back of the passing thought, and behind the stream of consciousness?

Then, too, one is conscious of oneself. One can look into one's own mind and, so to speak, see oneself thinking. A mere chemical and electrical machine could not possibly do that.

The only conclusion possible is that there is an active *ego* or *soul* behind the activities of the brain. Of course we are not to think of the soul as an independent, unchanged, and unchangeable substance dwelling apart from the brain in lonely state. Nor should we think of it as impressionable soul-stuff, like spiritual wax, that takes and retains impressions and acts as a carrying medium for memory. The real soul is an active spirit with powers of growth and change, but retaining the same identity throughout life. It is an active agent, not a passive substance. It persists even when various individual portions of the brain are destroyed or removed, so there is good reason to believe that it could exist apart from the whole brain after death, though of course during life this is impossible.

Here we have *reality*. We are not mere chemical or physical machines. We are living souls.

III. THE NATURE OF THE REASONING PROCESS

We are now ready to examine the reasoning processes going on in our minds. In this process, the soul is the *subject* of all experiences,

sensations, and thoughts. There can be no thought without the thinking mind as the active agent or the passive recipient.

In the second place, there are constantly entering the brain what we call *sensations*. My eye sees a red object and the retina and optic nerve report the red color to the brain. The brain cells bring this new stimulus to the attention of the mind, and the mind recognizes it as similar to past stimuli which it has called *red*. In the same way touch, taste, smell, and muscular sensations are reported to the brain and brought to the focus of consciousness in the mind. In a somewhat similar way mental perceptions are formed by the mind through bringing to the consciousness the memory of past stimuli received through the senses or formed by the mind as concepts and stored by the aid of brain cells.

These stimuli, when brought to the attention of the mind at the focus of consciousness, and received by it, become *perceptions*. Stimuli from outside the brain are *sense perceptions*; stimuli originating in the brain itself are *mental perceptions*. The soul, or mind, is the subject consciously or unconsciously receiving these perceptions at the focus of consciousness and then storing them, with the aid of the brain cells, in the memory. It is the soul which does the remembering, functioning through the brain cells. The soul is thus the monitor over the brain cells, working through them as its instruments.

But the mind or soul is not like a white paper on which sensations are registered, as if by a pen. The sensations that come into our minds do not come simply as undifferentiated stimuli. They come, in the case of the senses of touch, sight, and muscular sensations at least, with what appears to be *extension in space*, and all sensations come to us as a *succession in time*. Now there is no possible way by which space and time can get themselves directly registered in consciousness through the senses. They are non-sense qualities. Since our minds do not arbitrarily impose these ideas on the sensations, there is reason to believe that space and time are the forms in which God clothes His thoughts as He reveals them to us in the created world, and so exist objectively for us, though not objectively for God, for God is not *in* space or limited by time. Certain it is, however, that space and time cannot come to us through sense organs, nor can our minds move around in space outside the body. The nerve current is not spatial in form. The brain does not arrange its cells in a spatial manner on receipt of stimuli. What happens is that the mind itself applies space and time forms to stimuli as it receives them. On receipt of a stimulus the mind supplies the proper

space form to it, corresponding to the mode in which that stimulus comes to us from the world external to our minds. The time form is applied to the succession of sensations which comes into the brain, and the mind makes the *idea of succession*, as a result of receiving a series of sensations.

We call the ideas of space and time "innate ideas," because they are born in the mind itself when stimuli are received, and are applied to all sensations as necessary forms of thought. The mind claps these space and time forms on every sensation as it is received and cannot think without thinking in space and time forms.

In addition to space and time forms, there are certain other innate ideas formed by the mind when sensations are received. Two such ideas are "being" and "cause." We cannot think without assuming the existence of something. We assume that *we* exist and that we are receiving a sensation. In thinking we assume the reality of the mind that is thinking. This idea of "being" or "existence" is assumed in all thought. It does not come through the senses but is made by the mind as it receives sensations and as it thinks, though it is seldom in the focus of consciousness.

When the brain receives a sensation we assume that there is a cause for the sensation. We may not know *what* the cause is, but we cannot doubt that there is a *cause* of the sensation. The idea does not come through the senses but is made by the mind as sensations are received. Here we must carefully distinguish between the question of *what* the cause of a particular sensation is and the instinctive and inescapable conscious or unconscious assumption that there is a *cause* of the particular sensation. We may think the wrong thing is the cause, as in the case of various superstitions, but we cannot escape the assumption that there is *some* cause of the sensation.

The importance of this matter of cause cannot be overestimated, since it is so widely challenged at the present time. It was the philosopher Hume who first thoroughly analyzed the causal idea. He denied that this causal judgment is a true judgment. He confused the idea that there is a *cause* of the sensation with the idea of *what* the particular cause is. He declared that the mind derives the causal idea from the idea of uniform sequence. Two things repeatedly happen together or in sequence and we assume that the first is the cause of the second. But Hume quite rightly held that there is no *necessary* connection between the two things. One simply happens after the other, said Hume; we

have no right to assume a cause back of our sensations, producing them, because there is no necessary connection between them and whatever preceded them. One simply happens after the other. This view is called philosophical "agnosticism." It is widely held and underlies the philosophies of "positivism," "logical positivism" and "pragmatism," and the religious systems of "Ritschlianism" and "Neo-Orthodoxy" or "Barthianism."

But in reality the judgment of cause, in the sense of "there is a cause of my sensations," is not obtained from the idea of uniform sequence. We may never know that one particular thing always follows another, but if something happens, we instinctively know that it has *some* cause. We may think the wrong thing is the cause, but *we cannot think otherwise* than that there is some cause.

Hume's error was in confusing the two thoughts: (1) There is *some* cause of every experience I have, and (2) the particular thing which occurs before or simultaneously with the second thing is the cause of the second. Hume was quite right in pointing out that uniform sequence does not always mean that the two events are causally connected. What we think is the cause of the thing or event invariably following the first may not be the real cause at all. But the fact that we can be mistaken in determining the *real* cause does not mean we are at liberty to assume that there is no real cause at all. True, when two things usually or even invariably occur together, uniform sequence suggests that the first is the cause of the second. Close scientific analysis of the whole matter may reveal that an undisclosed third element in the situation is the real cause. Or possibly the uniform sequence is such that we say "A" is the cause of "B" since it invariably precedes it, while the real cause is so hidden that it has never been scientifically discovered. In fact the whole history of science is filled with continual discoveries of new causes in place of old ones hallowed by popular belief and age-long uniform sequence.

But that is a different thing from the *real* causal idea that *always* is present in the mind or unconsciously assumed by the mind whenever we have any sensation. We are compelled to think that every event has *some* cause, though we may never know what the cause is. Scientific curiosity leads to persistent experiment and research because men always know there are real causes of phenomena, which may be discovered if they are persistent enough in searching for them.

The necessary part of the causal judgment is that *activity by someone*

or something produces the observed effect. Every effect must have some cause, adequate to produce it. These "innate" ideas, which the soul produces unconsciously when the sensations reach the brain, are the tools used by the mind in constructing knowledge out of sensations received.

In reasoning, the soul receives the sensation from without and uses the innate ideas to construct sense and mental perceptions—and, in advanced reasoning, ideas which are the product of conceptual thinking. The latter is the process in the mind of making new ideas out of memories, by *imagination* and *reasoning*. These new ideas cannot be taken apart into different simple ideas, for they are indivisible. Some of them are called "abstract" ideas, such as "truth," "beauty," or "justice." For example, we see a number of beautiful things and form the abstract idea of beauty. None of these intellectual concepts has an independent existence apart from the mind of God and the created mind that discovers them by thinking God's thoughts after Him. Two people may think the same thoughts but that is because both minds are working under the same laws of the mind and thinking God's thoughts. But those thoughts are not entities existing independent of both God and created minds until one or the other captures them. That was something of the belief of Plato, who regarded ideas as real things existing apart from the thinker. True ideas correspond to the truth in God's mind and the correct laws of reasoning, which God has ordained. They are true because God has so ordained. False ideas are included in God's knowledge but are violations of reasoning laws, or contrary to God's nature or His created universe. A thought is the activity of a mind and the result of that activity, thinking the thoughts of God after Him according to His laws of logic. In the case of erroneous ideas, it is the result of breaking the laws of logic or of making wrong perceptions. Thoughts do not exist independent of God and man.

IV. THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE REASON

We have seen that there are three factors in the thinking process: the thinking soul, the sensations or memories used as material by the soul in constructing thoughts, and the innate ideas which are the tools used by the soul in the construction of thoughts. The simplest kind of thought is a *judgment*. A judgment is the action of the soul in *interpreting* sensations or mental states, and the result of that action. For

example, my eye sees a red object and reports it to the brain. This red sensation is meaningless until the mind reacts to the stimulus and thinks: "It is red." This activity of the mind and its result is called a *judgment*.

Now a judgment may be true or false. That is, it may or may not correspond to the truth which God knows and which He has ordained, or to the laws of logical reasoning. How, then, may we be reasonably certain that any particular judgment is true?

At this point we must consider man as originally created, then as he is after the fall, and also as he is when regenerated by the Spirit of God. He was created as a self-conscious rational creature in perfect fellowship with and in obedience to the Triune God. His thinking was almost always true because it was God-centered and therefore corresponded to the truth which God knew and to the laws of logical reasoning. It was possible for him to make false judgments, as proved by his accepting the statements of Satan in the Garden of Eden, but he did this by disobeying God's commandment. While his judgments were subordinated to the perfect will of God and agreed with God-revealed truth, they were always true.

But with the fall this was all changed. Though he still remained a rational creature able to think true thoughts and to apprehend God-revealed truths, he sought to be independent of God and His control. He became self-centered instead of God-centered. By disobeying God's command, he became spiritually dead (i.e., separated from fellowship with God), his soul became evil, and this total depravity affected his thinking processes as well as his whole personality. He began to try to think independently of God, so that most of his reasoning "became vain" and untrue.

At this point it is well to make a distinction between *thinking* true thoughts and apprehending their meaning, which the unregenerate man can sometimes do in spite of his total depravity, and *knowing* these same thoughts in their proper relationship to God and his own soul, which only the regenerated man can do. The object of thinking is the *meaning* of judgments or propositions, while the object of *knowing* is *truth* in its proper relationship to God, and the system of God-revealed truth, and applying and *accepting that truth for oneself*.

In considering the trustworthiness of the reason we must remember this distinction between *thinking* truths and *knowing* truths. An unregenerated man can *think* and *apprehend* the meaning of truths but

because such thoughts are divorced from the unified system of God's truths and unrelated to God and His creation and providence, he cannot truly *know* these same truths. The regenerated man can both *think* and *know* the same *truths*. Because the man who is not "born again" does not subject his reasoning to God, many if not most of his judgments are at least partially false. Their falsehood may consist only in the underlying assumptions if the judgments are formally true on Christian assumptions. The underlying assumption of unbelievers is that the Triune God has nothing to do with them. Thus, though certain of his judgments may be formally true when considered by themselves, their underlying assumption that God has no connection with them makes them false to him to just that extent.

An illustration will make the above clear. The judgments "Every effect has an adequate cause" and "My experience is taking place" are self-evidently true because God has ordained them to be true as the primary thoughts of a rational creature made in the image of God. All men must always make these judgments consciously or unconsciously. Yet when an unbeliever makes them, his underlying assumption that God cannot be the cause of any experience makes even these primary judgments only partially and formally true for him. This illustrates the Biblical statement that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21).

But such *a priori* judgments, apart from their false assumptions, are always true in form, even for the unbeliever. *It is in this formal truth, the same for believers and unbelievers, that there is a point of contact for rational discussion.*

The judgments which depend on experience, such as "it is red" are frequently false, even for believers. First, a judgment may be false when the brain is diseased or under the influence of drugs or intoxicating liquor. Second, external conditions may be abnormal. For example, a red object under a mercury vapor lamp appears blue. Third, without all the pertinent facts, a false judgment may easily be made. An uneducated man could say the sun goes around the earth. In the fourth place, a judgment is false when the mind does not obey the laws of logic and commits *logical* fallacies. In the fifth place, imperfect memory causes errors. Sixth, errors occur when a "hunch" or hypothesis is assumed to be true without sufficient testing. *Imagination* is a valuable power of the mind. It fashions ideas with little or no basis in proved external reality. Brilliant discoveries have been made by shrewd guesses

or "hunches" which have proved to be true upon testing. But such hypotheses must not be confused with proved truth and must be thoroughly tested before acceptance as truth. In *inductive reasoning* one must compare all hypotheses with the evidence, or error is sure to enter.

Seventh, errors occur in *deductive reasoning*. This is the process of deciding what must be true by deduction from known or necessary truth. But if what is assumed to be known or necessary truth is false, or true only under certain circumstances, then all our deductions will be false. For example, "A" is a well-known fact. If "A" is true, "B" must be true. If "B" is true, "C" must be true, etc. But if "A" is false, then all the other steps in reasoning are false.

And eighth, the emotional effects of *hate* on one's reasoning powers must always be considered. A Russian communist will hate God and all religion. It is thus impossible for him to reason correctly on religious matters, for his hatred will color all his thoughts and reasoning. On the other hand, love for God or another person *may* emotionally disturb our reasoning ability. The emotional effects of love, however, are far less than the effects of hate, for love will always put truth in the forefront of one's reasoning processes.

But when is a judgment trustworthy? Not only must all the above sources of error be avoided, but we must remember that an unbeliever in the Triune God will probably make errors because of his assumption that God does not concern him or the universe. As we said above, evil emotions will keep us from being fair in our judgments about the people we hate. Moreover, the fact that man cannot be omniscient makes it impossible ever to know all the facts. We cannot, therefore, regard our judgments as certainly true unless they are in perfect agreement with the revealed Word of God. All other judgments, based on experience, can be accepted only as tentatively true, provided they avoid all visible sources of error.

Though the assumptions of an unbeliever are false, he is still a creature made in the image of God (even if he will not acknowledge that fact) and may therefore reason correctly as far as the form of his reasoning steps and his conclusions are concerned. When we substitute Christian assumptions for his non-Christian premises, the steps of his reasoning process may be correct. This fact gives us a point of contact with the non-Christian in argument, and when we trust the Holy Spirit to bring home to him the meaning of our arguments, it is possible to hope that our discussion will lead him to accept the Christian conclu-

sion. Even before he is regenerated he may understand the arguments of a Christian though not accepting them as true for himself.

V. THE SCOPE OF THE REASON

In considering the trustworthiness of the reason we have partially defined the scope of the reason. The unbeliever in the Triune God doubtless will virtually hold that the scope of the human reason is unlimited. For him everything imaginable comes within the realm of investigation for the human intellect, and there are no limits to be placed on the comprehension of the human mind. Since he establishes his own standards or criteria of knowledge and reality, and lays down laws for what is theoretically possible or impossible, he actually regards himself as independent of God's control, and subject to no limitations intellectually or otherwise. In doing so, he assumes powers which only God rightfully has.

The Christian, on the other hand, recognizes at the outset that God is his omniscient Creator, and that man is His creature, created finite. God knows everything in His created universe *immediately*, intuitively, and directly. He does not need to go here and there to accumulate knowledge, for He made everything and knows all things without studying them. That is true not only for the present universe but for all past and future time as well. God's knowledge of the universe and history is immediate, intuitive, direct, and absolutely comprehensive, because God *planned* everything. In the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, God, "for his own glory, hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

Man, however, is a free agent, responsible for his actions, including his own sins, because he does what he wants to do, with no coercion on the part of God. But God, by controlling the *springs* of man's desires, and the outward circumstances of his activity, can fulfill His own plan without infringing on man's freedom.

A created human being, therefore, has as the scope of his reasoning and investigation all the created universe in the course of its history, past and future (as revealed in Scriptural prophecy), and the revealed Word of God. He can never have, even as a goal, all the knowledge which God has of Himself and of His creation—that is, knowledge which only God as God could have—for that would be to aspire to be God in knowing even the self-consciousness of God. Since man is a creature, it will never be possible for him to know the whole of God's knowledge

intuitively and directly as God does. Moreover, he can know only the things God has revealed, either in nature or in the Bible. He can never aspire to know God's own mind except as God has revealed facts about Himself in His Word.

In short, the scope of his reason while on earth is only the revealed Word of God and the created universe. Original thinking, in the absolute sense, is impossible for him. Of course he may think thoughts no other human being has ever thought, but all man can really do is to think God's thoughts after him. The created universe and the laws which govern it are the field in which the intellectual activities of man have their legitimate exercise. Now because all men were created by God, and because the universe too is God's creation, even unregenerated men many times can reason correctly about the universe and its laws, if we substitute Christian assumptions for their non-Christian premises. An Einstein can make the mathematical formulae, some of which were used by scientists in producing the atomic bomb and the H-bomb, and those formulae are correct as proved by the explosive results, even though Einstein's basic non-Christian assumptions are wrong. But when the non-Christian scientist or philosopher begins to reason in the field of philosophy or theology, the very nature of the subject matter, dealing as it does with the ultimate causes of the universe, makes it impossible for him to reason correctly. The distortion brought about by the fall of man into sin completely blocks the intellectual channels of such a non-Christian thinker and prevents him from reasoning correctly.

Because of sin and the fall of man into sin, man's soul, before regeneration, is spiritually dead and morally corrupt. It is this fact that warps man's intellectual processes, so that he continually ignores or rejects the spiritual implications of the evidence for the existence of God that is all around him in the created universe. All the arguments in this and the following chapters endeavoring to prove the existence of the soul, the validity of the ideas of *cause* and *being*, the evidence for the existence of God, and the proofs that the Bible is the Word of God cannot be expected, apart from the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and the work of the Holy Spirit in convincing and producing belief in the hearts of the readers, to lead unbelievers to become Christians. Only the Holy Spirit, in the end, can produce belief in the Bible as the Word of God, and acceptance of Christianity as the only true religion. What we can do is present *the tools* for the Holy Spirit to use in his work.

Because he is dead spiritually, the unbeliever is continually prone to error in reasoning. Before the conclusions of the reasoning process of the unbeliever can be accepted as true, therefore, they must be checked by the teachings of the Word of God, and all visible errors of thought must be eliminated. When all this is said, however, and all the above cautions are observed, if one's premises are Christian, the human reason can be tentatively trusted to give valid knowledge.

CHAPTER II

THE EXTERNAL UNIVERSE

I. INTRODUCTION

Having shown that there is a solid foundation in reality beneath the reasoning powers of the mind, we are now in a position to advance over the bridge of cause which we have erected, to determine the *nature* of the *cause* back of the sensations constantly entering the mind and being transmuted into knowledge. This line of reasoning has been subjected to a very plausible and erudite attack by a distinguished apologete.¹

No identification of the human self is possible in the realm of open chance. And no bridge of cause can be made from that which cannot be identified (the self) to something else that cannot be identified (the external world). The idea of causation cannot be taken as intelligible by itself in order by means of it to show that God has created the world. If God has created the world the idea of cause in the world must be determined from this its derivative nature. If it is first assumed to be working without God it cannot after that be shown to be working only in dependence upon God. The same point is to be made about the ideas of order, purpose and morality. If any of them can function independently of God at the beginning why do they need God at all?²

This line of attack might have some weight if we were advocating a universe controlled only by chance. That, however, is not what we are advocating. We believe as firmly as does Dr. Van Til that the universe is under the control of God and that the self is the creation of God.³ The laws of the mind, such as cause, being, etc., are ordained by God and are an expression of his thoughts. We do *not* assume that the idea of cause is working without God. But the "self," the idea of "cause," and the external universe are created "facts," available for all men,

¹ Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, pp. 374-383.

² *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-29.

Christian or non-Christian. They are the "data" for thought for all men, and because they *are* created by God they can and do reveal God to us (Rom. 1:20); they are the same truth for both God and man. Are we to assume that the self, the idea of cause, and the sensations received from the external world do not really exist for an unbeliever before he accepts God as the Creator? The unbeliever at first may not and probably will not interpret these facts as created and controlled by God, but that does not eliminate them as the same realities for both the believer and the unbeliever, and the subjective knowledge of these facts is partially the same for both and, in proportion as they are accurately observed, coincides with God's subjective knowledge of these facts. While the unbeliever does not acknowledge God's creation and control of the facts, they are still the same facts for him and for the Christian. His subjective knowledge of them is defective and only partial, because he interprets them as independent of God, but at the same time his subjective knowledge of the facts will be partially true. It is this partial truth that gives us the point of contact with the unbeliever. The Holy Spirit can therefore use these arguments to bring conviction to the unbeliever, and upon regeneration, achieve acceptance of the truth of the evidence and arguments.

We found in the last chapter that the position of agnosticism that it is impossible to know the nature of the cause back of our sensations was untenable, for cause is a necessary idea of the mind as created by God and is therefore valid as revealing the reality of the universe. We must conclude, therefore, that when we examine the qualities of the sensations entering our minds, we are really examining the qualities of the cause which produces them, or the qualities produced by the cause, if that cause is active, and that we can in this manner know partially at least the nature of this cause back of our sensations. Accordingly, we must first examine the qualities of our own minds and then the qualities of the sensations entering our minds, and so endeavor to arrive at a partial knowledge of the cause not ourselves back of our sensations. But before advancing along this pathway let us examine the principal types of explanations of this cause which have been made in the past.

II. MATERIALISM

The theory called *materialism* holds that the mind is only the epiphenomenon of matter. That is, it is produced by the brain cells "as an accompaniment of brain processes, determined by them, but incapable

of exerting any influence upon them."⁴ Mind, or consciousness, is said to have no real existence apart from the brain cells, so that the only thing that exists in the universe is said to be matter working under eternal laws inherent in it. Materialism holds that the chemical changes wrought in the brain cells throw off a sort of effluvium which we call consciousness, but as soon as the brain ceases to function, consciousness ceases to exist and vanishes forever. Not only is the mind of man nothing apart from matter, but matter itself, according to the earlier form of this theory, was said to be eternal and therefore had no creator or beginning in time. Recent discoveries in physics and astrophysics, however, have antiquated this type of materialism. It has been discovered that matter itself is not eternal but can be changed into radiant energy and thus dissipated throughout the universe.

At least three discoveries have outmoded the old type of materialism and, though atheistic materialists would be the last to admit it, have apparently undermined modern materialism as well. (1) The discoveries in the structure of atoms have shown that atoms are composed of forms of electrical energy. (2) The discovery of radioactivity has changed the whole concept of matter as being eternal, for the radioactive elements are constantly decomposing and losing weight. (3) Astrophysical discoveries in connection with the galaxies have changed our whole conception of the outer universe. We will treat these discoveries in detail later, but now we wish to emphasize the fact that the type of materialism held by atheists in the past century has proved untenable in the light of modern science. Matter was formerly held to be eternal, but now it has been found that the radioactive elements are constantly decomposing and losing weight. Matter was formerly held to be indestructible, but now it is known that the matter of the stars is being destroyed as matter and is being constantly radiated in the form of radiant energy into limitless space.

But though logically, in the light of such facts, it would seem that materialism would be abandoned as a theory of the universe, it is very much alive today in a more modern form. Moreover, the communists, who are atheistic materialists, appear to be increasing in numbers and ingenuity in the world, so that the theory is very much a philosophical and scientific issue at the present time. In the view of modern materialism, although atoms are composed of energy, it is that energy that is eternal, and by the changing forms of that energy the universe can be

⁴ *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition, p. 860.

explained, without the postulate of God as the Creator. We must therefore analyze somewhat in detail just what scientists have discovered regarding the universe.

Discoveries in the structure of atoms and in radioactivity have led to the conclusion that mass and energy are really one. Atoms are now believed to consist of an electron or electrons revolving around a nucleus of a proton or protons and neutrons. Some atoms are exceedingly complex, and their structure cannot be discussed in detail here, but for us the important fact is that the atoms are really electrical energy, not inert matter.

Since the discovery of radioactivity the concept of matter has entirely changed. Radioactive elements like radium and uranium change into other elements of lower atomic weight. The bombardment of U^{235} , or plutonium, with neutrons splits these atoms into two parts, releasing enormous energy and starting a chain reaction to make possible atomic bombs. Two new elements, neptunium and plutonium, numbers 93 and 94, are made by bombarding U^{238} with neutrons. Thus bombarded, U^{238} captures a neutron and changes to another isotope, U^{239} . This then emits a beta particle, becoming neptunium 239 . Neptunium 239 emits a beta particle, becoming plutonium 239 , another new element. Not only do these elements disintegrate, but new elements can be made in the laboratory; 102 elements are now known, though these newly made elements are very unstable and disintegrate almost immediately. In nature, however, it seems to be a one-way process: downward, by disintegration, until elements with stable nuclei are reached. During the process, energy is released and dissipated throughout the universe as heat and light radiation.

The radioactive elements are spontaneously radiating not only material particles, consisting of alpha particles (the nuclei of helium atoms, which consist of two protons and two neutrons) and beta rays (electrons), but also gamma rays, electromagnetic energy. Sometimes this electromagnetic energy takes different forms of visible or invisible radiation. The alpha particles which are ejected from the radioactive elements move at extremely rapid speeds. Those ejected from Uranium 1 travel at the rate of 8,800 miles per second, while the fastest, ejected from thorium C' travel at the rate of 12,800 miles per second. The beta rays travel almost as fast as light but weigh only $1/7,400$ as much as the alpha particles.⁵

⁵ Sir James Jeans, *The Universe Around Us*, p. 109. Quoted by permission.

Uranium constantly decomposes by radioactivity. In nature this is a one-way process, downward to simpler elements, never the reverse. All atoms are thought to consist of at least one negative electron revolving at about 1,000 miles per second around a positively charged nucleus. The proton in the nucleus weighs 1,840 times as much as the electron, so most of the atom's weight is in the nucleus. The nucleus vibrates at 182,000 times per/second. There is a third factor in the constitution of the atoms which must not be ignored, called electromagnetic energy (see above). As Jeans says, this may be thought of as bottled radiation.⁶ Though the weight of electromagnetic energy is exceedingly small, it nevertheless has weight, so that whenever any substance is emitting radiation it is losing weight. This radiation is scattered throughout the universe.

Uranium and other radioactive elements are constantly ejecting the various rays mentioned above and losing weight. Thus uranium decomposes and passes through a process of changing to other elements until at last lead²⁰⁸ remains. This is a different isotope from ordinary lead^{207.2} and so can be separated from it. Since we know the fixed rate at which uranium decomposes, it is always possible in uranium-bearing rocks, by comparing the amount of such lead with the remaining uranium, to determine the age of the rocks fairly accurately. There are three other radioactive "time clocks." Thorium²³² eventually forms lead²⁰⁸, rubidium⁸⁷ forms strontium⁸⁷, and potassium⁴⁰ forms argon⁴⁰. These all agree that the age of the earth is approximately 4,500,000,000 years, according to J. Lawrence Kulp, the same age as the meteorites which have reached the earth's surface. During decomposition and change, part of the weight of these elements is radiated as energy.

The thing that concerns us now about this whole process is the fact that it must have had a beginning. As already stated, there is no process now going on in nature by which the end products of the decomposition of radioactive elements can be changed back to the original elements. The change is entirely in one direction—from the heavier elements to the lighter ones. Sir James Jeans claimed that computations of conditions within the hottest stars show no probability that the heavier and more complex atoms like uranium are being built up there at the present time, in spite of the enormously high temperatures which must exist in the centers of some of the stars. (Jeans estimates that the interior of our sun has a temperature of about 50,000,000 degrees Centigrade.⁷) If these

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

elements like uranium are not being built up today, under such conditions, it indicates that a force not now acting must have acted in the past. Is not the most likely force which thus acted in the distant past the force of God the Creator?

When the hydrogen bomb was made, explosive energy was released by the process of fusion instead of fission as was used in the atomic bomb. Deuterium, heavy water H^2 , plus tritium (H^3) were combined to produce an isotope of helium (He^4) plus a neutron. The formula is as follows:⁸



The process of fusion was brought about by the heat generated by the explosion of an atomic bomb. When fusion thus takes place, an enormous amount of energy is released, estimated at 17 mev (17 million electron volts). While the chain reaction once started in the making of an atomic bomb can be arrested so that the atomic energy can be harnessed, as, for example, in an atomic submarine, at the present time that is impossible in the fusion reaction, since fusion can take place only at the high temperature of an exploding atomic bomb. Thus the fusion reaction when started by the explosion of the atomic bomb cannot be controlled and must take place instantly when the atomic bomb is exploded under the above conditions.

This leads us to the discoveries in the field of astrophysics. A very important line of evidence has come to light through the science of spectroscopy. Each element can be identified by different lines in the spectrum. In examining the spectra of the distant galaxies it has been noticed that the characteristic lines of the different elements are shifted toward the *red* end of the spectrum, thus indicating, it is claimed, that the source of the light is moving *away* from the earth, at a very rapid rate—that the universe is expanding rapidly (the evolving universe theory of Alpher and Gamow). The theory is that originally all the matter of the universe was condensed in a great mass of high density and exceedingly high temperature. Then a tremendous explosion occurred from some unknown cause, sending the dissociated protons, electrons, and neutrons outward at a temperature of about a billion degrees C. As they expanded and began to cool, they are said to have united into the various elements and perhaps a million or more years later formed the various galaxies, which are still traveling outward at

⁸ Oldenberg, *Introduction to Atomic Physics*, pp. 352, 355.

an extremely rapid rate. If that rate should exceed the speed of light, i.e., 186,000 miles per second, it is claimed that their light could not reach the earth.

Now if he expects this theory to be adopted, the materialist has to explain the source of the energy which first compressed the protons, electrons, and neutrons into the original vast mass. Then he has to explain the origin of the protons, electrons, and neutrons in their dissociated state. After that he has to explain the cause of the tremendous explosion posited, and then the cause of the formation of the galaxies. As Dr. Donald H. Porter, Professor of Mathematics and Physics at Marion College, says regarding this theory, "God would be in the picture."⁹

The Bondi-Gold-Hoyle theory is another explanation of the expanding universe. It is the theory of continual creation. According to it a galaxy two billion light-years away would be moving away at a velocity greater than that of light, and so would pass out of the vision of even the most powerful telescope. It is estimated that if the universe expanded at the rate these theorists compute for one-fifth the estimated lifetime of the sun, the universe would become virtually empty of visible galaxies. This theory postulates that matter is being continuously created to fill an otherwise empty universe as the universe expands.¹⁰ But acceptance of the theory necessitates the acceptance of God as the Creator.

The materialist would not be helped if he were to postulate that after a cycle of expansion the universe would then contract to the former dense, hot mass, and the process of explosion and expansion would be repeated. What force could possibly reverse the expansion process? God, of course, could do it, but the materialist rules God out. It has been suggested that radiated energy could be such a force, for that energy is being constantly dissipated throughout the universe. However, unless it be posited that infinite space is finite, with limits at the outer confines, the radiated energy could not turn backward. Impossible as such a theory would seem to be, we have only to ask what is *beyond* the assumed confines of space to see its fallacy. But there is another and even more convincing argument against the theory. Suppose that the cycle of expansion were reversed, and the universe were to contract to another dense and hot mass, only again to explode and expand. We must not forget that in the first process of explosion and expansion un-

⁹ John Clover Monsma, *Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe*, p. 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

told energy was radiated into space as heat and light and electromagnetic energy. Scattered throughout the universe, most of it could not return to its source. In infinite time this would mean that eventually the universe would become cold and dead. No matter which way one turns he is driven back to the conclusion that the universe is running down unless God keeps it going by an act of continuous creation. The Biblical account that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth is the simplest explanation of the facts of physical astronomy.

Now let us sum up the situation regarding materialism. In Chapter I it was shown that the material brain of man is not the whole of man. Man has a soul, spiritual in its nature, and if that be true, the principal thesis of materialism (that nothing exists except matter and energy) is disproved. If even the smallest portion of non-material reality can be shown to exist, then materialism cannot be an adequate explanation of the universe. The three lines of evidence presented in this section all show that the universe is now running down, thus pointing to a beginning in time when God created the universe. When we are dealing with infinite time, it does not help the theory of materialism to push the beginnings back a few millions of millions of years. If there was a beginning, we must ask whence and how, and the materialist cannot give a satisfactory answer. The existence of the soul, the downward path of radioactivity, the expanding universe, and the scattering of radiant energy in space are insuperable obstacles to the theory of materialism.

III. EXISTENTIALISM

We must interpose a hiatus in our examination of the different types of explanations of the universe to consider briefly a philosophical theory which has come to the fore rather recently. It is called "existentialism." "Existentialism—at least in the case of its leading exponents—is a philosophy of the meaninglessness of life, of the nihility, and mortality of human existence which is devoid of any prospect or future."¹¹ Essentially this theory is not an explanation of the universe (which is why we regard this exposition as a hiatus in our argument). It is a philosophy of life which has been accepted by many today because, as Spier says, "The desperate man of the twentieth century feels that he must accept with grim determination an existence which is without any

¹¹ J. M. Spier, *Christianity and Existentialism*, p. xvii.

future."¹² Existentialists agree that man is completely autonomous. Most of them are militant atheists (e.g., Heidegger, Sartre, and other French existentialists). A few (Jaspers, Marcel, and Loen) attempt to combine this essentially non-Christian theory with a more or less Christian view, without much success. "Human existence is to exist in freedom, and to be free means to be rid of any universal law or norm which is external to one's own autonomous personality. The Existential man is the creator of his own law."¹³ Most existentialists begin and end with "concrete human Existence." They make little attempt to explain the universe; as Sartre maintains, "even if God were to exist nothing would be changed in the world."¹⁴ Jaspers' philosophy is shot through and through with pessimism. He holds that "the highest goal that man can reach in authentic Existence is faith in oneself in the midst of *despair*."¹⁵

Since of course most existentialists completely ignore the Bible as the Word of God written, all the evidence and arguments which are presented in this book will refute their position. The whole philosophy might very well be ignored were it not for the fact that, either consciously or unconsciously, it seems to be that of the "beatniks" of the present generation and apparently underlies much of the irrationalism of modern art and music, as well as the pessimism of much of modern literature. "This tremendous influence is mainly due to the fact that Existentialism gives expression to the modern feeling in life of insecurity. Existential philosophy gives philosophical form to modern man's defeatism, pessimism, despair, negativity and feeling of the meaninglessness and absurdity of Existence."¹⁶ The theory would seem logically to be a philosophy of suicide! If life has no meaning outside one's own existence, why cling to life?

Thank God, the Christian knows that God is the One who lends meaning to life and that, however much we may be puzzled by the sin and evil which He allows to exist in the world, He nevertheless holds the reins of the universe. We know that we are in the hands of a loving heavenly Father who so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son to die in our place, so we know that we can trust Him for those problems that are insoluble to our finite minds. The escape from pessimism

¹² *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

and despair is in our trust in Christ, the Son of God. As we read the Bible again we see that war and destruction and apostasy are prophesied in the latter days before the return of Christ. We know that whatever the future may hold for us, even if we face death itself, we will be safe in the hands of our heavenly Father. Any human philosophy, such as this one, which "rejects the Word of God and seeks its starting point in human sovereignty, . . . lacks the light which enables it to find any meaning in life. 'Only in Thy Light, can we see the light.'"¹⁷

IV. PANTHEISM

The second explanation that has been offered of the universe is called *pantheism*. The literal meaning of the word is "all God." Pantheism, then, says that all that exists is God, and that He is the sum total of everything that exists; God has no existence apart from the things, including man, in the universe. The usual form of this theory denies the personality of God, though sometimes it is held that God comes to consciousness of Himself in man. According to this theory God is only a blind unreasoning force, or, as some put it, a great universal *will*, constantly striving upward and at last coming to consciousness in man. Pantheism has an exceptional appeal to many minds because it stresses the immanence of God in the universe. God, to such people, is not only the ever-present God but the ever-acting God, and all-comprehensive. We see the flowers blooming, says the pantheist, and hear the birds singing, watch the water pouring over the waterfall and hear the roaring of the breakers on the shore of the sea, and see God in it all. God is the all-embracing, brooding Spirit that not only is *in* all life but *is* all life, of whom we are a part, separated for a time, just as a drop of water is separated from the ocean, yet is a part of the ocean. As for man, he comes forth out of God for a time, plays his little drama of life, and then goes back into the vast reservoir of Being that is God.

The varieties of pantheism are almost numberless and to attempt to give a full discussion and criticism of each would take volumes. They extend all the way from the nature pantheism of Hinduism, where Brahma is the infinite substance or God that manifests itself in all nature, to the intellectual pantheism of Hegel, with whom the Absolute is pure *Thought*, and who insisted that thought *is* being, so that whatever can be thought of must exist. In Hegel's system, the most gigantic

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

structure of thought the mind has ever produced, the Absolute starts with pure Being, and, by a series of contraries which resolve themselves into a synthesis, progresses from abstract concepts into concrete realities, coming to consciousness in man through a long process of evolution. But though there is infinite variety in the different systems of pantheism, they all have certain fundamental general features which enable us to treat them as a generic class, without necessitating the refutation of each individual theory.

In the first place there is no distinction between good and evil in systems of pantheism. Satan really becomes God, for everything that exists is God. There can be no individual responsibility for sin or wrongdoing, for since all is God there is no one to sin against or to injure, and there is no reason to regard either evil men or good men as being actually distinct, or culpable. Why should one be called to account if we are all part of God?

In the second place, as Dabney said, "How can this one, unchangeable substance exist at the same time in different and even contradictory states; motion and rest; heat and cold; attraction and repulsion? How can it, in its modes of thought and will, be at the same time love in one man, and hate in another, for the same object? How believe and disbelieve the same thing?"¹⁸

In the third place, pantheism's assertion that the human individual is only part of the Infinite, and whatever apparent individuality he has is only deception, contradicts the plainest facts of consciousness. Not only is this assumption incapable of proof, but every individual *knows* immediately and beyond contradiction that he is *himself*, as distinct from every other individual in the world, and that he is distinct from the sensations that come to him from the external world. We *know*—and this knowledge is *immediate*, a part of every man's soul—that we *are* persons, and that we are distinct from every other person or thing in the universe. To assert the contrary is to assert a point that is disproved by every man's own self-consciousness. Pantheism has never given us one bit of *evidence* in support of the assertion that we are a part of God. It is bald assumption, absolutely ungrounded in evidence and directly contradicted by consciousness. This alone is sufficient to overthrow pantheism as a theory of the universe.

A fourth common feature of all pantheism is the denial of any real

¹⁸ Robert L. Dabney, *Syllabus and Notes*, p. 24.

separate personality of God apart from the consciousness of man, which of course, according to pantheism, is a part of God. When we speak of a personal God, it is charged that we are making God in our own image, with attributes that are simply a reflection of our own attributes. It may well be that the word "personality" is not the best term to apply to God, but after all we *are* made in the image of God in knowledge and righteousness, and when we attribute personality to God, everyone understands that we are saying that God thinks, plans, and wills; that God is wholly righteous, and hates evil, though He permits it for His own righteous ends; that God is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Personality is a known fact in the world. Now a cause must be adequate to produce the observed effect. How could personality in man develop from impersonal spirit? The cause could by no stretch of the imagination be adequate to produce the observed effect. Since there is personality in the world, there must be a personal God as its cause. Only consciousness could have produced or created consciousness in man. It is therefore impossible to judge that human persons could exist without a personal Creator back of them.

A fifth common feature of all pantheism is the identification of human beings with the external universe, and the allegation that both are all the God there is. Here again we are in direct conflict with the testimony of consciousness. If there is anything my consciousness tells me more definitely than the fact that I am distinct from other individuals and God, it is that I am separate and distinct from the sensations which come into my mind from the external world. I *know* that I am not the cause of the sensations and that these sensations come to me from without, so that I am not identical with them. These facts of consciousness stand as immovable bars to any theory of pantheism as an explanation of the universe. While the theory is still held in certain popular religious circles, it is a theory which is essentially bankrupt. No theory which contradicts consciousness can long hold the mind of man under its thrall. Moreover, as Coleridge said, "Pantheism is but a painted atheism."

V. THEISM

We come next to *theism*, a doctrine that explains the universe as the product of an omnipotent personal God, who exists transcendentally from

the universe itself. Theism at once divides itself into two principal classes, depending on whether or not the external universe is thought to have a permanent, abiding character, which we may for want of a better term call matter. While the newer discoveries regarding matter mentioned in the section on materialism have changed our ideas about matter, nevertheless it is still considered something concrete, apart from God—a substance disparate from the direct energy of God, and more or less independent of Him. It is said to be under the control of what are called the forces of nature, or natural laws, or, in theological language, *second causes*.

A. *Dualism*

The first of the two classes of theism is *dualism*. Since there are other philosophies called dualism, we must define the term as used here. Dualism is the doctrine which holds to the real existence of the substance called matter, non-spiritual in its essence, existing more or less independent of God, and under the control and government of second causes, the natural laws of the universe. Dualism is again divided into two main classes, depending on whether God is thought of as a God who created a universe, set it running under natural laws or forces, and then left it alone, or whether he is thought of as a God who is constantly in and under the operation of the second causes, controlling them and guiding them, and working out a definite plan for the universe.

1. *Deism*. The first of the two classes of dualism is called *deism*, the doctrine that God created the world around us either (1) as a finished product, or (2) as a mass of matter which evolved into the present universe through the natural laws ordained by God. Deism denies the fact of God's ever having intervened in the universe since it was first created, and believes that miracles or divine revelations from God have never occurred in any supernatural way. According to this theory God has limited Himself by ordaining second causes which actually control the running of the universe, so that He has for practical purposes abdicated the throne of the universe. Deism has been represented in the figure of a jeweler and a clock. The jeweler makes the clock, winds it up and sets it going, then leaves it alone to run by itself. If we could imagine that the winding of the clock could make it run forever, we would have very much the conception of what the deist thinks God has done to the universe—wound it up and set it going, leaving it to take care

of itself, under the control of the second causes, the so-called laws of "nature."¹⁹

In criticism of this theory there is little we will say at the present time. The whole subject will be discussed at length in Chapter V, where the arguments brought forward in support of the doctrine of supernaturalism are directed against this theory in particular. Historically the deists were a group of philosophical thinkers who believed in direct creation but denied divine intervention in the universe after it was created. This particular view is no longer held today, but the belief in evolution as it is commonly defined assumes the same position as the deists took in regard to the non-supernatural intervention of God in the universe, and men who say they believe in God in these terms are the practical successors of the deists and should be called by that name. This whole doctrine will be refuted in Chapter V.

2. *Christian realism.* The other division of dualism may be called *Christian realism*. This doctrine holds not only that God is transcendent but that He is also immanent in matter—not, of course, in any pantheistic way. The Christian realist believes that God has created matter, endowed it with certain properties, and placed it under natural laws which we call second causes. However, He does not leave it alone to work out its whole course, as the deist holds, but is constantly present everywhere in the universe, governing and controlling the operation of the natural laws. He is an ever-present God, constantly watching over His creatures and His creation and superintending all activities. The Christian realist also maintains that God not only has the power to intervene in the world of second causes but *has* intervened in performing the miracles of the Bible, and that He *does* intervene by an overruling providence today. His supernatural intervention was especially manifested in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection, as well as in the mighty miracles which Christ performed. His supernatural intervention was likewise manifested in the special revelation given to the writers of the Old and New Testaments, and also through the work of the Holy Spirit when he inspired the original writers of

¹⁹ The so-called "laws of nature" are a non-theistic fiction originated by men who wanted to exclude the idea of God's control of His universe. The terminology has been adopted, however, by most Christians without any realization of its essentially atheistic connotations. It has so much become a part of the language that we are forced to use it in order to make people understand the matter we are discussing. In this book we may use the terminology, but always with the reservation that we believe God is the controller of the universe and what we call its laws.

the Old and New Testaments so that they wrote only the truth which God wanted His people to have. Though the Holy Spirit guided and controlled those writers so that they wrote only the truth, he allowed them to use their own style and vocabulary but caused them to tell only that which was true.

(Some Christian realists who believe in the immanence of God do not believe in the supernatural intervention of God in the universe and should be classed with the deists in this respect.)

The view of Christian realism is the view commonly held in Christian churches. The ordinary Christian realist bases his belief in the reality of matter as a non-spiritual substance on what is called the common-sense view of the universe. That is, he usually makes little or no attempt to work out a metaphysics, but accepts the testimony of his senses as to the reality and actuality of an extended, solid world, in a universe of space. He finds this conception is not contradicted by the Bible and therefore bases his Christianity on this view of the universe. The vast majority of Christians either consciously or unconsciously take this view of the universe.

B. *Personal Pluralistic Idealism*

The second main division of theism, in opposition to dualism, is called *personal pluralistic idealism*. The position of its adherents is somewhat as follows. They believe in a *personal* God, who has created human beings and who has created the external universe, but they do not believe that the external universe is composed of a hard or soft or gaseous substance which the realists call *matter*. On the contrary, they regard what is commonly called matter as a manifestation of the energy of God's nature. The modern physicist tells us that the atom is composed of electrons, protons, and neutrons, which are apparently pure energy. The personal pluralistic idealist thinks that this energy cannot exist apart from the power of God, so he regards it as the manifestation of the activity, or energy, of God's nature. The sum total of all such energy is not God, however, as the pantheist holds, for God is transcendent as well as immanent in His universe. Like the realist, the idealist regards space as a reality, but not as a *tertium quid* that limits both God and matter, or as something that *contains* God and in which God exists; on the contrary, he considers space the necessary mode of God's thoughts and activity, just as space is the necessary mode of our thinking. The reason we see a particular object in a particular way is that we

are thinking space in a way that corresponds to the way God thinks and externalizes the object. We are made in the image of God and therefore our space dovetails with the space which God thinks as He manifests His energy in the universe He has created. The special point of difference between personal pluralistic idealists and realists has to do with second causes.

Instead of regarding second causes as forces which God has constituted independent of Himself, so that these natural forces govern and control the universe and God must interpose in their working in order to perform a miracle, the personal pluralistic idealist denies the existence of second causes. Natural laws are to him only the uniform way in which God acts and manifests His energy. The reason these laws can be depended upon by scientists is because God is a rational God who has planned the end from before the beginning and does not have to change His mind. *A miracle in such a case would be a change in the uniform way in which God habitually acts.* Not, of course, an accidental change, but a purposed change, known and planned from all eternity. The natural forces of the universe would be, then, the direct manifestation of the activity of God, constant because God never changes His mind.

According to this view, finite spirits are created beings, made in the image of God, with the essential characteristics of His nature, though not with either the omniscience or the power of God and of course not with God's omnipresence. Finite spirits are not a part of God, yet they are spirits just as He is a Spirit. They are finite while He is infinite. They are separate from God in personality but not independent of His control. They live their own lives, as responsible, rational beings, but God hedges their pathways about in such a manner that, while they act in accordance with their natures, their own actions are all known and included in God's plan and purpose. They have freedom of action but not freedom to act contrary to their natures—or perhaps it would be better to say they cannot want to do what their own natures forbid their doing. God controls the springs of their actions. That is, he so conditions the external circumstances and internal inclinations that, although they act freely, they want to do what God wants and has determined that they shall do.

The higher animals, and in a descending scale the lower forms of life, are what according to this view we may call *partial selves*. They are not entirely separate ontological entities but are included in the

consciousness of God. They are, so to speak, on the periphery of His consciousness. They have not been endowed by God with self-conscious personality, and so remain included in His consciousness.

Such, in brief, is the view of the personal pluralistic idealists. They believe in a personal God, a plurality of finite created spirits and entities in the external universe, and the spiritual or energistic nature of the substance we commonly call matter. It is impossible to discuss the evidence and arguments in support of this belief, but obviously it is in perfect harmony with the Bible, though it is not claimed that the Bible directly teaches either this view or that of Christian realism. This theory teaches a real creation, such as Genesis declares occurred, and does not contradict the Bible in respect to the doctrines taught therein. It is sometimes charged by its opponents that personal pluralistic idealism tends toward pantheism, but the contrary is the case. Its belief in the personality of God as distinct from the personality of man, the fact that God is regarded as transcendent as well as immanent in the created universe, and the fact that man and the universe are not identical render this view the diametrical opposite of pantheism.

Startlingly close is the view to which modern physicists have been driven by their discoveries, as will be apparent from the following quotation:

Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter—not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts. . . . We discover that the universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds.²⁰

Both Christian realism and personal pluralistic idealism are in harmony with the Bible, but the Bible directly teaches neither theory. The arguments advanced in the following chapter for theism will apply to both of these types. There the reasons why it is necessary to believe that *God* is the cause of the sensations which the mind is constantly experiencing in the brain, and also why we are forced to believe in the existence of a personal God, such as all advocates of theism believe in, are

²⁰ Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*, pp. 186-187. Quoted by permission.

stated. If the personal pluralistic idealists are correct, then God is the *immediate* cause of these sensations in our brains, for the sensations are the manifestation of His energy in matter. If, on the other hand, dualism is correct, then second causes interpose between God and the sensations in the brain. But in either case it is necessary to postulate God as the ultimate cause of these sensations. The position taken in the following chapter will be a defense of Christian theism in the broad sense.

The three theories advanced above, materialism, pantheism, and theism, are the principal types of explanations of the universe. Atheism is not an explanation of the universe but a denial that God exists. It falls therefore into the class of materialism. Agnosticism simply declares that the ultimate explanation of the universe cannot be given; therefore it is not an attempt to explain the universe. That position was refuted in Chapter I.

For the sake of completeness two other types of explanation might be mentioned, polytheism and pluralism. The first of these has been widely held by uncivilized tribes. It is the belief in many gods having separate spheres of power and influence. The unity of the universe and modern science have offered complete refutation for any such belief in divided powers. The same arguments apply against pluralism, which is the theory that the universe is composed of separate and independent entities. This theory is simply polytheism raised to the *n*th degree, for it would insist that the whole universe is made up of these minute and independent "reals." The unity of the universe is a refutation of it.

Appendix to Chapter II

Presuppositionalism

This theory of Van Til is called "presuppositionalism" and is rather widely held in Reformed circles at the present time. For a devastating rebuttal of the idea that we cannot prove the existence of God apart from the Bible, see *The Resurrection of Theism* by Stuart C. Hackett, pp. 153-175. Dr. Hackett is not a believer in the Reformed Faith, and we cannot agree with his position (as given in his book on pp. 172-175) when he denies the absolute sovereignty of God and the total depravity of man and declares that man must accept Christ as Saviour *before* the Spirit of God regenerates the heart. However, his position regarding presuppositionalism and his refutation of that type of apologetics is convincing and thorough. A rejection of presuppositionalism does not necessitate the acceptance of Arminianism. Total depravity does not mean that man's intellect is either destroyed or rendered incapable of thinking true propositions and asserting them to be true. Truths thought prior to regeneration, and asserted as true, are not altered by regeneration but are now known in an experiential sense and in their proper orientation to a theocentric system of truth, while new implications and relationships are soon discerned by the renewed soul. In spite of the position of Dr. Van Til and his associates that "there is a qualitative distinction between every point of God's knowledge of a truth and man's knowledge of the same truth so that they do not coincide at any point no matter how infinitesimally small that point may be" ("The Complaint," and also Appendix, p. 95, 1948 Minutes of the General Assembly, Orthodox Presbyterian Church), the content of the knowledge of man, either unregenerate or regenerate, coincides with the content of God's knowledge of the same facts in so far as what is known by man is the truth which God knows. This means that there is definitely a point of contact between the regenerate man and the unregenerate man, and also that total depravity does not make it impossible for the unregenerate man to know truly, though partially, the truth of God in revelation and in the natural creation. It is this fact that rescues us from skepticism and makes it possible to present an objective argument for the existence of God, with the hope that the unregenerate man will understand and be convinced that God exists, even *before* he is regenerated. In fact it is often such argument that is used by the Holy Spirit to condition the individual for the sovereign act of the Spirit in regeneration. He cannot savingly believe in Christ until he is enabled by the Spirit of God to accept the truth of the Bible in relation to himself. Before regeneration he can intellectually apprehend the arguments for the existence of God, and the deity of Jesus Christ, for example, but cannot experientially *know* these truths until he is regenerated (I Cor. 2:14). The idea of cause (see Chapter I) is implanted in all men at creation and supplies a bridge into the external world through the study of the sensations received from the external world. Thus we can make an argument for the existence of God without assuming His existence as a presupposition of our argument. Were this not so it would be absolutely useless to try to argue with an unregenerated person. If there were no point of contact with him he could not understand what we were saying and our words to him would have an entirely different and false meaning for him from what we intended. If we could not argue from given external facts and propositions that were in part the same for him as for us, then there would be no use in preaching the gospel to him before he was regenerated, and after that there would be no use in preaching the gospel to him because he would already believe in Christ!

CHAPTER III

THE REASONS WHY WE MUST BELIEVE IN GOD

I. INTRODUCTION. THE PROBLEM ABOUT GOD

We now come to the reasons for believing in God. But at the outset we are confronted with an insuperable problem. As Christians and believers in the God of the Bible, we know that the Christian God is Triune: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We know that the Bible tells us that this Triune God created and controls the universe. We know that the Bible teaches us that this God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.¹ We know that God the Son came, was born of the Virgin, lived sinlessly on earth, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven.

As Christians we know all this about God from the Bible record, but we also know that most of these things depend upon the Bible record itself for their proof, and that we cannot prove them apart from the Bible record. The unbeliever to whom we are trying to prove the existence of God, however, will not accept the Bible as true. Can we show him that the Christian God exists? Unless he is first shown that the Bible is true, he will not accept what the Bible says about God. But the Bible, from the beginning to end, teaches the Christian God, so we are faced with the problem of trying to prove the existence of the God in whom the unbeliever has no faith, from a Book which he will not accept!

Unwillingly we are forced to admit that we cannot offer mathemati-

¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 4.

cal proof of the existence of God. All that we can offer is inferential proof, and yet this is not a matter of indifference to men.² If what the Bible teaches is true, no one can escape God's control even for an instant. A man might deny that he was going around the axis of the earth at a thousand miles an hour. He might claim that because he could move around on the earth's surface he was the master of his own destiny and had decided not to go around the axis of the earth. His decision would in no way alter the facts. So the unbeliever's denial of the existence of God does not change his relationship to God's control for an instant.

But this question of the existence of the Triune God concerns everyone during life and is especially pressing when death approaches, evade it as we will. Is there such a Triune God, to whom one must give an account for deeds done in the flesh, and even for the attitudes taken during one's life? Or does death end it all? Everyone at times uneasily wonders about this. Even the existentialist in all his bravado must have uncomfortable moments as he thinks about approaching death. The communist dictators pretend to scoff at the subject, but we may be pardoned if we lift a skeptical eyebrow as we listen to them. A certain rich man in California, it is said, would not allow death to be mentioned before him, but that merely proved that the fear of death was ever with him. Be he agnostic or atheist, indifferent man of the world or philosopher in his study, man never escapes a nagging fear of what happens after death.

Obviously God could settle these questions. He knows everything, including the future, for He controls the future and could tell us about it if He chose to do so. The Bible claims to give such information from God. It asserts that the destiny of every man depends on his attitude toward the Triune God in *this* life. The Bible declares that man will be given no opportunity to change his life or his destiny after death. The Bible declares that there is a judgment after death, and that man's attitude here in this life, toward God the Son, the Jesus Christ of history, determines the sentence imposed by the Divine Judge, Jesus Christ, on Judgment Day. *The question of God's existence is therefore the most important question in the world!*

But not only is the question of the existence of God important because it concerns eternity; it is important because it concerns the understand-

² See pp. 12, 17, 34 for "point of contact" with the unbeliever.

ing of the universe itself. The fact that God *exists* alters the interpretation of every other fact, for God *controls* the facts. If we leave God out of consideration, therefore, we cannot know the *whole* truth about anything. Sure knowledge about the simplest fact would be impossible for somewhere in the universe there might be some fact that would change that knowledge we thought we had.

An illustration should make this clear. Suppose an ignorant man obtains a transistor radio without knowing what it is. A little fiddling with the dials brings forth music. Noticing that the little box is unconnected with anything, he concludes that he has a box to manufacture music. He would seem to have all the facts about that little box in his hand, but because he is ignorant about the principles of radio, he knows almost nothing about it that is true. It is said that an Arabian potentate visiting in the United States of America was fascinated by the water faucet in his hotel room. When he was returning to Arabia, his host asked if there was anything he had seen in America that he would like to take back. His face lighted up and he said he would like, more than anything else, the little metal contraption in his hotel room that brought water when he wanted it! Water was very scarce in his own country, and it would be a wonderful blessing if he could take that little faucet back with him so that he could have water whenever he wanted it!

Let us carry the transistor radio illustration a little farther. Suppose the man in the story is not ignorant but a radio engineer. He understands all the laws of electronics. He understands the manufacturing of radios and can answer any question about it that one might ask. Would he have, therefore, *all* the truth about radio? Does he understand really what electricity is? Might it be that, just as the ignorant man did not understand the principles of radio, so the radio engineer does not understand some principle as yet unknown that would modify the "knowledge" he thinks he now has? Impossible, you say? How can you be sure? If we leave God out of our reckoning, we will have to be omniscient in order to know that we have sure knowledge about anything.

Now of course we admit that some knowledge an unbeliever possesses is true as far as it goes, and is the same truth God knows, if we ignore the false assumption that God does not exist. God is a rational God and therefore He guarantees the truth of the *true* knowledge possessed by the unbeliever, unknown to that man. But if, for a moment, we were to assume that there was no God, this same knowledge possessed by the

unbeliever would not be *certain* knowledge at all, for some fact somewhere in the universe might negate it, and only an omniscient man could be *certain* he had *sure* knowledge about anything.

How does the fact that God exists change the possibility of being certain that we have true knowledge? Since God is a rational God and controls the future, *the created universe is a revelation of dependable truth* if correctly interpreted, in the light of the teaching of the revealed Word of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."³ Sinful man does not usually interpret the universe correctly, because he does not depend on the Word of God for his key of interpretation. But when he is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, man can, in the light of the teachings of the Bible, interpret the universe with a relative degree of certainty—relative because he does not have comprehensive knowledge, and because sin tends to lead him into error. When he interprets the Bible correctly, it becomes a standard by which to obtain and test true knowledge, though that knowledge may be incomplete. What man calls "nature," when interpreted from the Bible point of view, becomes a source of true knowledge of the universe and of God himself, to both a believer and an unbeliever.

Now it is in the fact that God guarantees true knowledge of Himself in the facts of "nature," properly interpreted, that we have a basis of discussion with an unbeliever. He can understand our arguments from nature, if they present the truth, and though he will not accept all of those arguments for himself unless the Holy Spirit regenerates him, we can thus have fruitful discussion with him. If God has chosen him for eternal life, it may be that the Holy Spirit will use our discussion as a preparation for His regenerating act.

But how can we know that it *is* God who created the universe and that He really exists? We cannot see or handle Him. He is not found in the test tube or seen through the eyepiece of either the microscope or the telescope. May it not be that the universe is ultimate, and that there is nothing back of it?

The presuppositionalist declares that we cannot *prove* the existence of God and must *assume* His existence in presenting the gospel to the unbeliever.⁴ We readily grant that we cannot *prove* the existence of the Triune God with all His attributes apart from the Bible, but the Bible itself declares that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firma-

³ Psalm 19:1.

⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith*, p. 377.

ment showeth his handiwork." In other words the fact of creation by God can be shown through the study of "nature." The Bible also declares that we can know God's power and deity from the created universe and can recognize that we should worship Him.⁵ This would seem to indicate that it is possible even for an unbeliever to know that a God of power sufficient to create the universe exists, and should be worshipped as God.

The presuppositionalist goes still farther. He says that even if we could prove the existence of God it would be only a finite god, not the infinite God of Scripture—only a god big enough to create the universe. We ourselves, it is said, would have to possess infinite knowledge in order to be certain that God is infinite, for unless we had infinite knowledge there might be some undiscovered fact in a distant corner of the universe that might prove that God was not infinite.

We admit, readily enough, that the arguments we expect to make will prove neither the infinity of God nor His triunity. That must come after the Bible is accepted as a revelation from God, for such facts can be shown and known only from God's revelation of Himself to man in the Bible. We do not claim that reasoning can prove that God is either infinite or triune. We do not claim that the revelation of God in nature is *sufficient* to prove this. But we do claim that it is a *finite* revelation of the *true* God. It tells us much, but not all, about Him. It does give us *true* knowledge, though finite, of the *infinite* God as He has revealed Himself in the universe which He has created. We *do* claim that these arguments prove the existence of a personal God capable of producing the whole vast universe, and that a study of the facts of the universe gives us true and valid knowledge about the being of God revealed in creation.

Once such facts are established, it becomes logical to accept the arguments from archaeology, history, prophecy, the resurrection of Christ, and Christian experience, which lead to the conviction that the Bible is the record of God's revelation of Himself and of the world which He has created. When Biblical revelation is accepted, it becomes easy to believe the teaching of the Bible that God is triune, unchangeable, and infinite. Somewhere along the line of such argument and evidence, it is hoped that the Holy Spirit will bring repentance and active trust in and obedience to the true and living, infinite, Triune God of the Bible.

Our solution, then, of this problem of proving the existence of God

⁵ Romans 1:19-20.

to an unbeliever is based on the fact that God has created the universe as *facts* which are true for both the believer and the unbeliever. The latter puts the wrong interpretation on the facts as a whole, but in so far as he knows truth about them, we have common ground upon which we can build proof for the existence of God. The Holy Spirit must produce acceptance and trust in that Creator.

II. THE CAUSAL ARGUMENT⁶

Our starting point is in our own souls. We *know* that *we* exist. This knowledge is immediate and cannot be doubted. Now in making such a statement we are not assuming that we are uncreated. *We* know that God created us because the Bible so tells us, so *that* knowledge is back of our whole argument. But even for the unbeliever, the knowledge of his existence cannot be doubted by him.

The next step is inescapable. We know that we did not produce our own souls and bodies. We must have been caused by someone with power sufficient to produce our souls and bodies. We must have been caused by either a Person or an impersonal force. Here we appeal to the axiom that the cause must be adequate to produce the effect. How could an impersonal force produce a personal being? How could that which neither thinks nor wills produce that which thinks and wills? The materialist declares that in a universe of chance anything is possible if enough time is given to produce it, but no chance combination of atoms or molecules could produce something which does not consist of atoms or molecules: consciousness and soul! How could lifeless matter ever by chance grouping of atoms and molecules produce that which is not matter, a soul? Or how could impersonal spirit, with no self-consciousness, and consequently no purpose, ever produce that which is self-conscious and which shows the result of purpose? To appeal to "evolution" as the cause of the soul is to use a word without content, for even if evolution were true it would be only the *description of a process* by which things are said to have come to be what they are now. Evolution could not be an active *cause*, capable of producing the process described by evolution. If evolution were true it could only point to a Person back of the process, underlying it and guiding it to the high end of the production of man's body. The soul of man, not

⁶ Cf. Stuart Cornelius Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism*, Chap. III.

being composed of matter, could not be evolved by a material process. When we describe *how* a thing is produced, we do not account for the production of the thing itself. *That* demands a cause adequate to produce the observed effect. Only a powerful personal being could produce a thinking, willing person.

1. As we look about us, we see other persons, like ourselves. The similarity of their natures to ours suggests a common cause. They too must have been caused by a powerful Person.

2. The processes of birth are not sufficient to account for us. Physiology tells us that the body of the mother, while it supplies food to the embryo, apparently has no active part in the formation and growth of the tiny body in her womb, much less of the soul itself. All the human body does is to transmit life *which it did not produce!* Whether the soul is created at birth or handed down from the parents with life itself, the parents are never the actual *cause* of the soul, for they are only the mediums by which the soul is brought to consciousness. The only possible conclusion is that the human ancestors are not the real *cause* of the new individual. The development of the embryo is a marvelous thing. Is it possible that the union of two microscopic cells which in no way resemble the body can actually produce the human body? Those tiny germ cells with no self-consciousness or purpose cannot be a cause adequate to produce the adult man!

Then we look inside our bodies and see the life processes rebuilding our tissues. What is life? Is life intelligent? Does life itself think or will? Are these vital forces a manifestation of a Power back of them, not human, that thinks or wills?

All this evidence points to a *personal* cause, with power adequate to produce the world of thinking, willing human beings. The God of the Bible is an obvious answer.

But as we have previously shown, sensations continually come to us from outside our bodies. There must be an ultimate cause adequate to produce them. As we saw in the quotation from Sir James Jeans on page 32, physicists are practically agreed that ultimate reality is non-material and non-mechanical. They believe that the universe shows evidence of a designing and controlling Power. The facts of radioactivity and astronomy all point to a creation in the past, and creation demands a Creator with power adequate to produce the vast universe. Therefore, even if we trace our sensations to matter and energy outside

ourselves, only a Person is an adequate cause of the material universe. The fact that the universe about us is intelligible to us indicates that the Mind that planned and produced it has intellect. The law and order in the universe point to a Person, for only a person is rational. "Nature" obeys the laws of geometry, music has an absolute scale (not, of course, the seven-tone scale of western music), the elements in matter are grouped in the periodic table according to definite laws, and the stars in their courses are governed by law. A Person must be in control.

III. THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

Plan and purpose are characteristics of our own minds, and when we find them about us in "nature," do they not indicate that the Cause of the universe is capable of purposive thinking?

Consider the earth on which we live. It is tilted at an angle of 23 degrees. If this were not so, the water vapor from the oceans would go to both the north and south poles, condense, and pile up mountains of ice. If the sun gave off half as much heat we would all freeze, while if it gave off twice as much heat we would all be roasted. If the moon were only 50,000 miles away the tides would sweep over the highest mountains. If the earth rotated on its axis at only 100 miles an hour instead of 1,000 miles an hour, we would freeze during the nights and burn up during the days. If the crust of the earth were only 10 feet thicker there would be no oxygen to breathe. If the ocean were a few feet deeper all the carbon dioxide and oxygen would be absorbed and vegetable life could not exist.⁷ Could such a combination of things occur by chance to form an earth where men and women could exist? Certainly it indicates design. Who taught the birds to make their nests? Why is it that some birds lay eggs shaped like a top so that they cannot roll off a cliff? Why do European eels and American eels both go to the ocean near Bermuda, mate, and die, while their offspring born at sea, with no parents living with them, return not only to the very shore but to the very river or lake where their parents lived? Who guides them on their long journeys?

Why is it that when water freezes it begins to expand just before the freezing point? Were it not so, the lakes would freeze to the bottom and a real glacial period would envelop the world. The working

⁷ *Reader's Digest*, October, 1960, p. 72.

together of rain and sunlight, soil and air, in the production of food to sustain life is one of the most powerful proofs of a Cause who is a planning, rational Person. The fact that cells in plants and animals divide according to plan points to a rational Cause. All these items and a million others point to a Designer and Planner who has prepared this earth for our occupancy.

IV. THE ARGUMENT FROM BEAUTY

It is characteristic of personality to enjoy beauty. Sorrow and joy are real states of the soul. We are able to love others in the highest sense of the word. The beauty and grandeur of the world arouse feelings of pleasure and appreciation in our souls. A beautiful sunset does not seem like a chance happening. The separation of the different colors of the rainbow through refracted light, the harmony of natural colors, the music of birds, the tinkling and rushing of the waterfall, the majesty of a storm at sea, the bursting of the petals of the rose, the delicate beauty of the African violet, the scent of the English violet—all point to a Cause who planned such things for the enjoyment of mankind and a manifestation of His own glory. As I write these words an exquisite rose in our garden is in full bloom. The blossom is about six inches in diameter. The petals are white in the center, with red fringes at the tips blending to a beautiful pink down the petals to the pure cream and white centers. This rose is of course the product of plant breeding and crosses, grafted onto a common stock rose. It is the product of human planning and design, but were not the original strains in existence, the plant breeders could not have achieved it. What can we say, however, about the countless examples of beauty all about us in nature? What shall we say about the diatonic scale in music? The musician merely manipulates the laws of music to bring forth beautiful sounds. Only a planning Person could produce all these things.

We must not think that God is subject to human passions, or that He has emotions subject to change and fluctuation. The emotions of joy, pleasure, and love which we experience seem to reflect settled and permanent states in God's consciousness, having no temporary aspects. It is therefore more proper to regard them as characteristics of God's intellect. While our love may grow cold, God's love never changes. Human joy lasts but a short time, but God's joy is eternal and unchangeable.

V. THE WORLD AS WILL

In addition to the intellect, the will is a fundamental faculty of the soul, subject to the planning and direction of the intellect. All our activities stem from acts of will. Acts of will either result in or tend to result in motion.

When we look at "nature" we see motion everywhere. The air, the grass in the field, the animals and insects, the clouds in the heaven, the waves of the sea are all in constant motion. Sap moves in the plants, the rocks corrode, the soil itself is constantly changing. The very particles of matter composing the hills are in constant motion. Physicists tell us that the atoms are composed of vibrating nuclei surrounded by whirling electrons. We may call the nucleus bottled energy, which when set free in the hydrogen bomb explosion releases an unbelievable amount of energy. This energy is potential motion everywhere in the universe.

Now, when we think, motion is produced or tends to be produced, so that motion is the symbol of the activity of our wills. Does it not seem that the motion in the universe is the expression of a mighty Being whose will is manifested throughout the universe? The fact that, according to the most recent discoveries of physics, mass and energy are forms of the same fundamental reality indicates that the universe is the expression of the will of the mighty Person who is its Creator and Preserver. This will, which we see expressed in the universe, is not engaged in purposeless, uncontrolled activity but is acting according to law and order. Law and order indicate a mind back of them. God's will, then, is directed and controlled by His intellect, so that purpose is manifest in all His activity.

But may there not be more than one cause back of the universe? The reason we must reply in the negative is that there is such unity in the universe that two separate causes are unthinkable. The fact that the forms of energy are interchangeable and that the same laws govern the whole universe; the fact that all the elements are constructed according to the same pattern, and that humans are more nearly alike than they are different, certainly points to a common Maker. All these are conclusive arguments against any theory of pluralism. The unity everywhere in the universe points to a single Author.

The fact that the unity of the universe points to one Author, and

only one Author, cannot be too much stressed. The latest discoveries in physics have marvelously shown a fundamental unity in the material universe. Not only is the whole universe governed by the same laws, but even energy, electricity, light, and matter itself are now regarded as various forms of the same fundamental reality, and, as the quotation from Sir James Jeans given on page 32 shows, that fundamental reality is not now thought to be material in its nature. The fact that all the laws of nature seem to be universal in their application, and uniform in their action, is convincing proof that the Cause of the universe is a single Author.

One of the most subtle evidences of a single personal Cause of the universe is found in the periodic table of the elements. With its similarity between the various elements in their different groupings, that table certainly points to a single Creator and Governor of the elements. Can one look at all these things and fail to conclude that there is only one Cause?

VI. THE MORAL ARGUMENT

The last argument which we shall touch upon is the moral argument. In a way this is a part of the causal argument, yet because it has a slightly different bearing at this point, we shall treat it separately. Man is a moral being. He is a creature not only of appetites and passions but of standards of right and wrong, of justice and duty. Since he has a moral nature, it seems probable that the Cause which produced him is likewise moral in nature.

Is there a conscience, and if so, what is its nature? At this point we are confronted with a question which must be satisfactorily answered before we can proceed farther with this argument for the existence of God. Is there a power in the human soul called *conscience*, the universal possession of all mankind? In many quarters today it is held that there is no such thing as a conscience universal to all mankind. It is claimed that the thing we call conscience is purely a matter of education and environment, developed by society through long experience as to what is for the best interest of society, and imposed on the individual by social pressure and parental training. It is also claimed that moral standards are constantly changing; what is considered wrong today may be considered right tomorrow, and what is right today may be wrong tomor-

row. The outlawing of the slave trade is quoted as an example of standards changing with the passing of time. Again, it is claimed that there is no one standard of right and wrong throughout the world, but that the standard varies with different races and different civilizations.

Much evidence is brought forward in support of this view, and at first glance the position seems almost impregnable. Yet before accepting it, let us notice its implications. If there is no conscience universal to all mankind and independent of environment, our whole moral and religious fabric is destroyed. If there is no conscience, there can be no such thing as real sin, for without that faculty of the mind which says "I ought to do right," when it is made clear to the mind that a course of action is right, there can be no moral reprehensibility attached to wrongdoing. In that case all permanence for ethics is gone and with it religion, for the individual has no requirement to worship God even if there be one, since permanent moral obligation is lacking. A mere glance at these implications is enough to make us cautious about accepting the theory of morals upon which they rest. What can we say about these claims?

In the first place, there is much about these claims that we can admit. It is true that early training and environment have a great influence upon a man's opinions and moral judgments. It is likewise true that those actions which we call right actions usually make for the ultimate good of society. It is true that the moral standards of society are different in different countries, and that they change with the passing of years. We may admit all these things and still hold to our belief in the permanence of right and in the existence of a universal characteristic of the mind which we call conscience.

There are a number of misconceptions as to what is meant by saying that every man has a conscience. It is *not* meant that everyone at birth has an infallible guide that always enables him to discern whether a thing is right or wrong, always leading, like a bloodhound, to that which is eternally right. It is *not* meant that this faculty is independent of environment and education, enabling a man invariably to pick out a course of action which will be forever right. It is *not* meant that the mind possesses an unerring ability to perceive the rightness or wrongness of any course of action which may be presented to it. All history would disprove the existence of such a quality of the mind. Yet it is this very faculty that most objectors have in mind when they oppose a

belief in a universal conscience, and the fact that their opposition is to such a straw man lends plausibility to their arguments.

What is meant by the statement that conscience is universal with all mankind is that there is a certain characteristic innate in the mind which enables a person who has reached the age of reasoning ability to make a judgment as to the rightness or wrongness of any course of action which may be presented to the mind. Faced with a particular course of action, the mind instinctively, involuntarily, and often unconsciously reacts with the corresponding judgment: "I ought to do the right." This reaction of the mind is what is meant by *conscience*. It is not claimed that the conscience always makes a correct judgment of what is right. The correctness of the judgment depends upon a number of other factors, including the knowledge of the true standard of right. As was seen in the chapter on the human reason, the mind is trustworthy only when working under certain definite laws, and all that was said there applies to the mind making moral judgments. There are numerous sources of error in a judgment made by the mind on a question of right and wrong, and the more complex the question to be determined, the more numerous are the possible sources of error.

Now education and environment enter into the case in training the individual to reason properly, and in giving him the *correct moral standard* by which to estimate his acts. *The mind, in itself, has no moral standard!* Moral standards are acquired by education and environment, and the approbation of the particular standards, and living up to them, depends upon the religious attitude of the individual. The particular kind of a conscience, that is, whether it is acute or sluggish, warped by sin or enlightened by Christianity, is largely dependent upon the conditions surrounding the individual, but the fact of the conscience's existence is not contingent in any way upon education or environment, for every individual *must* make a moral judgment, either consciously or unconsciously, as to the rightness or wrongness of any course of action, though such a judgment may be mistaken when estimated by true standards. *The only true standard is the Word of God!*

Returning to the argument for the existence of God from the fact that man has a moral nature, we quote from *Theism*, by Borden P. Bowne: "As there is no known way of deducing intelligence from non-intelligence, so there is no known way of deducing the moral from the non-moral." It is unthinkable that all the splendid characteristics of

mankind, such as justice, love, and kindred characteristics, marred by sin though they are, should have been produced by a cause having none of these. A moral man must have a moral God as his Maker.

VII. CONCLUSION

All the arguments in Chapter II against materialism, and the other false theories of the universe, are arguments in favor of theism. There would seem to be no alternative for a thinking man but to fall before the wonderful Being who has created him, and to worship Him. Let it be borne in mind that the arguments cited above are cumulative. Each adds proof to the others, and their force is felt only when they are taken together.

It is important to discuss the question of what we mean by proof as related to the existence of God. When we say that we are attempting to *prove* the existence of God, we do not mean mathematical proof, such as the proof of a geometrical theorem. Nor do we mean laboratory proof, which is shown by successful experiment. As we have already said, we cannot put God under a microscope or see Him through a telescope. We cannot combine chemical elements and produce God. The kind of proof we are discussing is *inferential proof*, the culmination of innumerable lines of evidence all pointing to what seems an *inescapable conclusion*. That of course is not to say that men cannot evade the conclusion, as the atheist does. We can never *force* men to believe in God. The evidences of God's existence seem plain to most reasoning men, but sin so blinds some men's eyes that they cannot see what is plainly before them. The evidence for God is there, but only the Holy Spirit can make men accept it.

It is also important to remember that *man cannot escape making a choice between explanations of the universe*. He must make a choice, not between theism and no "ism," but between theism and some other system of the universe. As has been already pointed out, there are only six systems logically possible, though there may be several subsystems under each head: agnosticism, atheistic materialism (existentialism really belongs here), pantheism, pluralism, polytheism, and the various forms of theism. One must choose which of these systems he will follow. *Not to choose, or to attempt to withhold one's decision*, automatically places him in one of the first two classes. If he thinks at all (and everyone in full possession of his mental faculties *must* think), he consciously or

unconsciously shapes his life by one of these systems. One's life system may not be logically thought out, but it is nevertheless *his* philosophy of life and of the universe. If we must have some system of living, should we not actively test the different systems and choose the best? Of course many men will not do that because they are dead in sin. It may be, however, that the Holy Spirit will use these lines of argument to prepare some souls to make this choice consciously, and accept Christian theism as their own choice. All that has been said against the other systems is additional evidence in favor of theism. To him who doubts we can only say, "Taste and see." The lives of those who consistently hold to Christian theism are the best and most conclusive argument in its favor.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORLD TODAY AND ITS ORIGIN

I. THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

The attitude of most biologists and geologists today is much like that of Professor Hobart M. Smith as expressed in his book *Evolution of Chordate Structure* (1960): "Organic evolution is here regarded as an unshakable fact. Evidence for it is now completely overwhelming." Probably the larger number of present-day scientists believe in organic evolution, and most writers in both scientific and popular magazines regard it as a proved part of science.

Interesting in this connection is the definition of evolution that is now given by many scientists and others. Smith, in the above book, defines it as follows: ". . . organic evolution only means change—*inheritable change in lines of successive generations*. . . ." Thus evolutionists capitalize on a point that no one in his right mind who knows anything about biology would deny, namely, that there are constant changes in organic life, and then blandly assume that therefore evolution is a proved fact of science! The definition of evolution which we would discuss is this: Organic evolution is the theory that all forms of present-day organic life have evolved through resident forces from the very simplest forms of life, through progressive changes that have carried the stream of life ever upward until the evolutionary forces have produced man and the higher animals and plants.

Organic evolution is constantly confused in popular literature with more general forms of evolution which may or may not be true. Thus we must distinguish between evolutionary theories which are opposed to the Bible and those which may be made to harmonize with the Bible. Then we must not becloud the issue by arguing that because there may have been development in the inorganic universe, such as an exploding universe, therefore there has been progressive evolution in the organic

realm. Moreover, we must not lose sight of the fact that the theory of organic evolution is still a *theory*, not a proved fact. Evolutionists were not present when life started, and even according to their own claims, many years have elapsed since that event took place; it is possible that the evolutionists are mistaken about the theory they hold so persistently today. Let us now examine briefly the principal theories of evolution.

A. Causal Evolution

The theory of causal evolution is that evolution itself has been eternal, and that it is a cause adequate to explain the present universe. This theory is usually held in connection with a materialistic theory of the universe and stands or falls with it. It is of course fundamentally opposed to the Bible teaching in Genesis, for Genesis teaches that God was the ultimate Creator of the universe. The theory is essentially anti-Christian. It deifies evolution, making it into a self-running, automatic god, and gives us the absurdity of the personal, intelligent, moral creature brought into existence by an impersonal force. It is hardly believable that intelligent men could really accept such a theory, and as a matter of fact, it is practically dead at present, outside of communist countries. Rare is the scientist who would attempt to defend it rationally, though many scientists tacitly assume it in their discussions. All that was said in the previous chapters applies with equal force to this theory. Yet though the theory is practically defunct, in the popular mind, strange to say, it is often confused with the more modern theories of evolution; there seems to be a popular delusion to the effect that evolution is an adequate theory of the universe, and that therefore the modern scientific world has no room for God. Of course, in the fields of physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology nothing could be farther from the fact, yet it persists like a superstition.

B. Modal Evolution

This is the theory which says that evolution is merely the instrument which God used to create the universe, or the mode of His activity in bringing to pass the events of creation. Whether He did so is a question of fact to be decided by evidence, and the evidence seems to show that this was not the way God created the world.¹ Nevertheless, if other evidence should be discovered showing that modal evolution was a fact, the theory doubtless could be harmonized with Genesis, as will be shown later.

¹ Floyd E. Hamilton, *The Basis of Evolutionary Faith*.

C. *Cosmic Evolution*

The theory of cosmic evolution is that branch of the general theory of evolution which deals with the origin of the earth and the rest of the material universe. It usually starts with the supposition of matter already in existence, either, as in the old theory, in a condition of "primitive nebulosity," governed by certain laws and acting under certain forces, chief among which are gravitation and chemical affinity, or, as in the case of the expanding-universe theory of Alpher and Gamow, in a great mass of high density and exceedingly high temperature. If the latter, the mass was then scattered by a tremendous explosion of unknown cause, sending dissociated electrons, protons, and neutrons outward at a temperature of about a billion degrees Centigrade. As they expanded and began to cool, they are said to have united into the various elements and perhaps a million or more years later formed the various galaxies, which are still traveling outward at a very rapid rate. (See Chapter II, p. 21.)

While adhering to the theory of cosmic evolution a person could be an atheistic materialist, a pantheist holding that the constituents of the atoms are the substance and attributes of ultimate Being, or a theist holding that these conditions were all brought about by God, who was the First Cause and is the constant guide and sustainer of the whole process. We have already pointed out the difficulties with an agnostic position, with the materialist position, and with the pantheistic position. There is no *a priori* objection to the theistic view of cosmic evolution, regarding evolution as the mode by which God created the universe, after first creating matter and setting in action the various forces governing the whole subsequent process. From the point of view of the Bible, many people who believe thoroughly in its divine authorship claim that there is nothing in the Bible to contradict this kind of evolutionary theory, and it is doubtless true that it is possible to harmonize the two. But it is likewise true that there is as yet no evidence which compels us to attempt the process of reconciliation, and until such evidence is brought to light, it seems better to accept the traditional interpretation of Genesis and hold aloof from the theory.

D. *Organic Evolution*

Organic evolution is the theory which holds that all existing life, in whatever form, has evolved from a primordial cell or cells. It is this

theory that is usually referred to when evolution is mentioned. In discussing evolution one must bear in mind the fact that the theory of organic evolution cannot be condemned as a theory because of the discarded doctrines held by some of the advocates of the general theory, nor can it be assumed either that organic evolution as a general theory is opposed to the Bible, because many of the varieties under its head are opposed to the teachings of Genesis, or that if the general theory be proved true the Bible account of creation must be false. Organic evolution must be considered as a theory apart from all metaphysical or religious views held by its advocates. Undoubtedly some varieties of organic evolution are fundamentally opposed to the Bible. Equally beyond doubt is the fact that many of the advocates of evolutionary theories which in themselves are not necessarily opposed to the Bible have, because they themselves do not believe the Bible account of creation, added extraneous points to their evolutionary theories, thus apparently setting the theories in opposition to the Bible account. In the opinion of this writer, the defenders of the Bible account of creation have shown altogether too much tendency to confuse the general theory of organic evolution with the religious and metaphysical views of many of the advocates of the theory, and to make no distinction in their opposition between the theory itself and the personal religious views of those who hold the theory. Two men may hold the same general theory, but one of them may deny God any part in the process of evolution, while the other may attach Christian views to it. For example, Charles Darwin, in his theory of natural selection, excluded God altogether from the process, while at the same time A. R. Wallace, who was the co-author with Darwin of the theory, believed in a spiritual world back of the physical world, with God controlling the stream of evolution and at certain points interposing in it to add a new factor. On the other hand, the advocates of evolution have been far too inclined to assume, because of their own anti-Christian religious views, that there is an opposition between their theory and the Bible account, which may not exist. We must, then, avoid on the one side wasting our strength in useless opposition to irrelevant views held personally by some evolutionists and on the other side reading into the Genesis account of creation ideas which the original author never meant to express, and by so doing manufacture an opposition between the Bible and science which does not really exist.

The modern theory of organic evolution is usually associated with

the names of Darwin and Wallace, co-authors of the theory of natural selection. The Darwinian theory, which is now in large part abandoned as a complete explanation of evolution, was that the evolution of species was brought about by the process of natural selection. Five important principles were laid down by Darwin in his explanation of the causes of evolution.

1. *Overproduction.* All animals and plants tend to multiply more rapidly than it is possible for them to obtain food upon which to exist. Malthus in the preceding generation had applied this idea to the growth of human population and Darwin applied it to the rest of organic life.

2. *Struggle for existence.* As a result of overproduction, there is a constant struggle going on between individuals and between species for the opportunity to live.

3. *Variation.* Every individual of a species of plants or animals varies from other individuals in the same species in an indefinite number of ways, so that no two individuals are alike in every respect. Some of these variations will render the individuals possessing them better able to survive than others of the same species, and some species having an accumulation of favorable variations will tend to survive better than other species lacking the favorable variations.

4. *Natural selection, or the survival of the fittest.* In the struggle for existence, only those individuals which are best fitted for the struggle will survive.

5. *Heredity.* By the theory of heredity, individuals transmit many of their own characteristics to their offspring, so that those variations which rendered the individual able to survive are passed on to descendants. By the accumulation of these favorable variations, new species are formed through the geological ages. Darwin believed that acquired characteristics were transmitted to the descendants, and also that the variations were mainly of an extremely minute character in every conceivable direction, while only the individuals with favorable variations survived.

Such, in brief, was the theory which Darwin put forward over a hundred years ago, to explain how evolution came about. The geologists of the period had arranged the fossils, found in rocks, in an ascending scale, from the lowest forms of life to the highest types of plants and animals, large numbers of which are living today. The geologists then put forward the theory of "successive geological ages," each lasting

millions of years, and asserted that during the passing of these millions of years there was a continual progress from the lower to the higher forms of life, and from the simple species to the complex and highly differentiated species. Geologists described the process they thought must have taken place, and Darwin put forward the theory of natural selection in an attempt to explain the *cause* of the process. The thesis of geology of Darwin's time was that only the forces now acting in the universe ever acted in the past, so that all the changes through the geological ages took place in a gradual and uniform way. This view is called "uniformitarianism." The more modern view that there have been repeated sudden catastrophes on the surface of the earth would seem closer to the facts and might offer explanations of much geological evidence.

Now the vital points of Darwin's theory are these: (1) Do variations which, if given time enough to accumulate, might be capable of originating new species occur, or *have they occurred* in nature? (2) If such variations can be shown to have occurred, are they inherited? It is obvious that, if no variations capable of originating new species had ever occurred, even though natural selection were a force to be reckoned with, no new species would ever have been produced. It is equally obvious that, even though such variations occur, unless they are inherited they cannot originate a new species, no matter how worthy of survival the individual possessing them may be. Natural selection might conceivably kill off individuals and species which were not fitted for survival, but it in itself is not a cause capable of forcing individuals or species to vary so as to form new species, and without such inherited variation there can be no evolution.

Do heritable variations which might, if given long geological ages in which to develop, produce a new and different species, occur in nature today or have they occurred in the distant past? Evolutionists will at once reply that the study of the fossils (paleontology) proves that such variations have occurred. But holding such alleged evidence in abeyance for the time being, let us press the question once more: What other evidence can be produced to show that such variations have occurred or can occur? Evolutionists reply that comparative anatomy, embryology, geographical distribution, and blood characters all show that such variations have occurred. But no matter how strong a presumption in favor of evolution may be raised by the facts that animals and plants

have great similarities in structure and form, that the embryo of the higher animal passes through certain stages in its development during which it resembles animals lower in the order of life, and that the distribution of plants and animals on the earth seems to indicate relationship between the different groups these facts do not constitute positive evidence that evolution has occurred, for there is another and equally plausible explanation, namely, that God was the Maker of all the animal and plant forms and that they are similar because they represent the most suitable form, structure, and development possible.

The most recent so-called proof for evolution is the blood-reaction test, which is said to determine the degree of relationship between the species whose blood is tested. For example, the blood of a man is injected into the veins of an animal, such as a rabbit, with the result that an "anti-serum" is formed in the rabbit's blood. Added to various kinds of blood, the anti-serum causes a precipitate to be formed in varying amounts, depending supposedly on the degree of relationship to man of the animal whose blood is tested. This has been claimed as direct proof of evolutionary relationship between man and the lower animals. As Professor Morton has pointed out in his book *The Bankruptcy of Evolution* (pp. 187 ff.), this so-called proof proves too much, for according to the results obtained, the lemur, belonging to the ape family, is not as closely related to man as the mouse or the porcupine! The quantitative and qualitative tests did not agree in their results, and when examined closely the results obtained by these experiments certainly are far from a proof that actual relationship exists between animals whose blood was tested and man. The fact of the matter is, as Morton has explained, that the tests only go to show what no one questions, that the chemical properties of various kinds of blood are similar. But the fact that the same elements are in the blood of monkeys and men and mice in no way proves that these animals and man are actually related in descent. Certainly if the same God made them all He could make the blood more or less after the same fashion and would not be compelled to use different elements in making the blood of men and of apes! Similarity thus in no way proves relationship. If on independent grounds the evolutionist is able to show that the variations capable of producing evolution have actually occurred or are occurring today, all the evidence from anatomy and embryology will become corroborative, but without such proof this other so-called evidence is worthless.

The proof of the evolutionary theory, then, in the last analysis, rests

on whether heritable variations capable of producing evolution are occurring today in nature or can be shown to have occurred in the past. The evidence must be weighed without prejudice.

E. Kinds of Variations in Nature

1. *Minute variations.* Each individual differs to a greater or less extent from every other individual of the same species. Darwin based his theory on such variations. It was the accumulation of these minute differences through many generations that enabled natural selection to separate the fit from the unfit. These minute variations are now known to be uninherited. To quote Vernon Kellogg, the eminent biologist, in an article published in the early part of 1923 in the *New Republic*, "The results of modern biological study . . . have shown that many of these small variations are not inherited. They are merely fluctuations around a mean to which the offspring tend constantly to return." In other words, though small variations constantly occur in nature, they *are not inherited* (unless they are Mendelian variations or mutations, which will be discussed later). Evolution cannot have occurred through their accumulation through successive generations, as Darwin thought, for they *are not inherited at all!*

2. *Environmental variations.* A second kind of variation constantly occurring in nature is that produced by *environment*, or acquired in some way during the lifetime of the individual. An arm that is exercised becomes large, while one that is not withers away. A plant that is placed in fertile soil grows much larger and stronger than one put in poor soil. Such examples of variation are too many and too common to need mention. Herbert Spencer said in 1893, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, "Close contemplation of the facts impresses me more strongly than ever with two alternatives—either there has been inheritance of 'acquired characters' or there has been no evolution." Yet today practically all scientists agree that there is no inheritance of ordinary acquired characters! To be sure, the present time is seeing what bids fair to be a revival of the belief that at least some acquired characters can be inherited. The reason for this revival of interest in Lamarckism is probably due to the fact that other possible causes of evolution have one by one been eliminated, thus causing the evolutionists to turn back once more to the discarded doctrine of Lamarck and try to galvanize it into life.² The Austrian biologist Kammerer

² Vernon Kellogg, *Evolution the Way of Man*. Kellogg admits this.

claimed to have induced heritable changes in the color and reproductive habits of salamanders by environmental surroundings. Pavlov, the Russian physiologist, taught some mice to come to their feeding place at the ringing of a bell, and he claimed that the trick was inherited, for it took 300 lessons to train the first generation, 100 lessons to train the second, 30 lessons to train the third, 10 lessons to train the fourth, and only 5 lessons to train the fifth generation.³

Of course, it is easy to criticize this last experiment by saying that there might have been a difference in the methods of training or a difference in the intelligence of the different generations of mice, and that the trick might have been taught by the parent mice to their offspring at birth or immediately after, but even granting all that can be claimed for these experiments, we are still a long distance from establishing the inheritance of acquired characters as a real cause of evolution. There is too much fundamental evidence on the other side in this Lamarckian controversy to claim that any great number of acquired characters are inherited. All the great series of experiments of the past seventy-five years, which show that practically no acquired characteristic is inherited, still remain sufficient to prove that such variations have not been a real cause of evolution. Experiments like the cutting of dogs' ears for several generations, the binding of Chinese women's feet for centuries, the transplanting of large valley plants to mountainsides, where the following generations became dwarfs, only to return to the original size when they were replanted in the valley, and many similar experiments show that as a rule acquired characteristics are not inherited and cannot be a cause of evolution.

3. *Abnormalities and deformities.* Individuals are sometimes born with abnormalities such as clubfeet, two heads, or extra fingers or toes; occasionally two bodies are joined together by cartilage, etc. Until fairly recently such forms could not be explained, and since the changes were not helpful to the individual, they were largely ignored, for evolution could not be caused by them. Now all such changes are known to be caused by mutations, which will be explained later. When there is a shifting of chromosome material from one chromosome to another, or gene disturbance in the chromosomes, abnormalities occur.

4. *Mendelian variations.* One of the greatest contributions to biology of the past century was the discovery, by an Austrian monk named

³ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

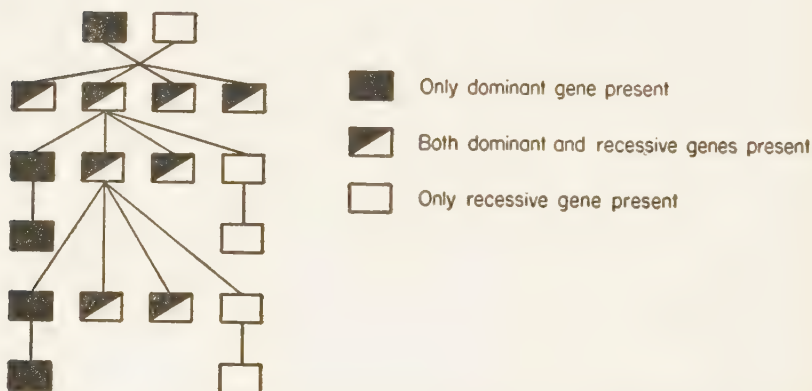
Gregor Mendel, of what has since been called *Mendel's Law*. It is unnecessary to go into a detailed discussion of this law, but a brief outline of it will help us to understand "Mendelian variations."

Whenever two individuals are bred together, the characteristics of both parents are to a greater or lesser extent transmitted to the offspring. However, instead of being equally blended, it often happens that a descendant inherits more qualities from one parent than from the other. This is explained by Mendelism as being due to the fact that each germ cell is composed of a bundle of qualities called genes. Genes are indivisible as inheritance factors and are inherited wholly or not at all. Now some genes are usually called "dominant," others "recessive." Each dominant gene has a paired recessive gene. When the dominant and recessive are both present in the individual usually only the dominant can show itself in the outward appearance of the individual. The recessive gene is manifested in the outward appearance of the individual only when the dominant with which it is usually paired is absent. Whenever the dominant is present in the individual it shows itself in the outward appearance, even though the recessive with which it is paired is likewise present.

When an individual possessing a dominant gene is crossed with a pure recessive, the offspring will all be in appearance like the dominant parent, but in the following generations the offspring will be in the proportion of *three* apparently dominant to one recessive. Of the three apparently dominant individuals one will have no recessive gene while the other two will have recessive genes present which do not show in the outward appearance. The offspring of the pure recessive will all be pure recessives, never again showing the dominant character unless rebred to an individual possessing the dominant character. The offspring of the pure dominant will all be pure dominants unless crossbred with an individual having the recessive character. The offspring of the individuals having both the dominant and the recessive characters will be in the proportion of one pure recessive, one pure dominant, and two mixed dominant and recessives. This can be best understood by glancing at the following diagram, showing what occurs when a self-fertilizing reproductive plant like a pea having a single dominant gene is crossed with another kind of pea having a recessive gene. The black represents the dominant genes, the white the recessive genes. Bear in mind the fact that where the dominant is present it always shows in the

outward appearance and the individual is in appearance like the pure dominants even though the recessive gene is likewise present.⁴

DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING MENDEL'S LAW



When two or more different contrasted genes are involved, the result is far more complicated; nevertheless the offspring are in the proportion which can be determined beforehand if the crossing factors are known. For example,⁵ when a Black, Short hair, Rough fur guinea pig is crossed with a white, long hair, smooth fur guinea pig, we have three dominant characters in the first guinea pig and three recessive characters in the second guinea pig. In the cross there are 64 possible combinations. We let B indicate the dominant Black homozygous genes in the first guinea pig, and b the white recessive homozygous genes in the second guinea pig. Similarly S indicates the dominant Short hair and s the recessive long hair, while R indicates the dominant Rough fur and r the smooth fur. The 64 possible combinations of the contrasted genes will be as follows:

27	BSR	all dominants
9	BSr	2 dominants and 1 recessive
9	BRs	2 dominants and 1 recessive
9	SRb	2 dominants and 1 recessive
3	Bsr	1 dominant and 2 recessives
3	Sbr	1 dominant and 2 recessives
3	Rbs	1 dominant and 2 recessives
1	bsr	3 recessives

⁴ Discoveries by Professor Morgan show that dominance is not an essential feature of Mendelism.

⁵ Cf. R. B. Goldschmidt, *Understanding Heredity*, pp. 86-88.

Now it will be noted that there are a number of apparently new individuals among these guinea pigs included in the 64 combinations. This, however, is not evolution, for all the characters were present in the two ancestor guinea pigs. No new genes were added to the descendants of the original two guinea pigs.

It will be seen at once that there is vast room for variations according to Mendel's Law. Wherever it is possible for two individuals to interbreed, whether plants or animals, there is room for new Mendelian variations, some of which will breed true. Moreover, wherever an individual is the result of a Mendelian cross, the original strains can all be separated out with time and careful breeding and selection. The modern science of plant and animal breeding is based on the application of Mendel's Law.

At first sight it is no wonder that when Mendel's Law was rediscovered in 1905 it was hailed as the very mechanism of the evolutionary process. As time went on, however, Mendelism was revealed as a blind alley as far as discovering the causes of evolution went. There are several reasons why evolution could not have been brought about by the natural application of Mendel's Law.

In the first place, Mendel's Law does not apply to any species that reproduces solely by cell division. In the first unicellular organisms, lacking sexual reproduction, there could be no crossing according to Mendel's Law. In other words, since evolutionists claim that evolution started with unicellular organisms which reproduce by the process of cell division only, there would be no Mendelian variations. Thus if evolution had to depend on Mendel's Law, the whole process could never have gotten started!

In the second place, even though in some unknown manner evolution occurred in the simplest organisms until eventually sexual reproduction arose in nature, making possible crossing according to Mendel's Law among organic forms which could breed together, there still could arise no new species, and so no evolution! The reason is that, while artificially Mendelian variations can be segregated until a race that breeds true is separated from the rest of the group, such segregation cannot take place in nature. In nature there would be no permanence for Mendelian variations. The moment they are allowed to interbreed with the rest of the group the individuals lose their distinctive variations. The group constantly tends to produce individuals having the greatest number of common characteristics. No evolutionary species could thus arise solely according to the application of Mendel's Law.

But the third and conclusive reason why evolution could not occur if it depended solely on Mendel's Law is that before the law can apply *the genes for the various characters must already be in the race!* If a hundred unit characters are present in a given group of individuals, the descendants of any possible grouping of those individuals will show only those *hundred original unit characters!* Some individuals among the descendants will have a certain combination of unit characters, while others will have an entirely different group of unit characters. Not one individual in the whole group of descendants will have a gene, or unit character, different from the original hundred unit characters! In other words, if you depend on Mendel's Law, you get out only the genes, or unit characters, that you started with. Mendelism could never originate a unit character or gene.

Mendelism has therefore proved to be an evolutionary *cul-de-sac*, for it offers no solution whatever to the problem of what causes evolution (if indeed there is anything that causes evolution). Mendelism does indeed explain a vast number of the varieties in the world, both of plants and of animals, but evolution could never have started at all if it had been contingent only on Mendelian variations according to Mendel's Law.

5. *Mutations.* There is one other class of variations known to science, namely, *mutations*. Evolutionists who have abandoned hope of finding the cause of evolution in other kinds of variations have turned expectantly to mutations. We must now discuss the question as to whether new species could have originated through such variations. A mutation is a change in inheritance factors contrary to Mendel's Law. Because of the importance of this type of variation we shall devote a disproportionate amount of space to it.

Formerly all mutations were thought to be caused by the addition of a characteristic through a mysterious process which thus caused a sudden change in the race. Today mutations are known to be produced either by a change in a gene or genes or by a change in the relationship of the various genes among themselves. The work of Professor T. H. Morgan and his associates has brought to light the intricate mechanism of heredity,⁶ and mutations are no longer thought to be produced by the addition of characteristics from without the organism.

The nucleus of the cell is composed of microscopic filaments called chromosomes. The number of chromosomes differs between species but

⁶ T. H. Morgan, *Theory of the Gene*.

(except for certain exceptions to be dealt with later) is constant for each species. In this connection there arises a line of powerful evidence against the theory of evolution from the number of chromosomes in various species.

F. Chromosome Evidence

Striking evidence has come to light regarding the numbers of chromosomes in the various species of plants and animals. Though we are here dealing with the *very mechanism of heredity*, the chromosome numbers of the different species *cannot be arranged according to any evolutionary tree imaginable!* It cannot be claimed that evolution occurred by the *addition of chromosomes* from a "lower" species to a "higher" species. (Polyploidy, the doubling or trebling of the number of similar chromosomes in plants, does not add new kinds of genes to the plants, for the doubled chromosomes contain the same variety of genes as appeared in the race before the doubling or trebling.) Nor can it be claimed that evolution occurred by the elimination of chromosomes from a "higher" species to a "lower" species, for these numbers cannot be made to *correspond to any possible evolutionary* arrangements of these plants and animals! Stebbins says that "plant physiology provides no evidence in favor of the hypothesis that progressive evolution has been accompanied by a regular increase in the number of gene loci found on each chromosome."⁷ Therefore, of course, there is no increase in chromosomes in the progressive fashion demanded by progressive evolutionary theory. The following are the numbers of chromosomes in various plants and animals—first the number in animals, including man.

Man, 48 or 46 (for the female)

Monkey, 54

Dog, 22

Cat, 36

Horse, 38

Diestrammena marmorata, an insect, 58

Aphis saliceti, 6

Drosophila melanogaster, the fruit fly, 8⁸

Certain radiolaria, over 1,600⁹

Copepods of the Crustacea, *Cyclops strenuus*, 11; *C. Gracilis*, 3

⁷ G. L. Stebbins, Jr., *Variation and Evolution in Plants*, pp. 80 ff.

⁸ E. B. Wilson, *The Cell in Development and Heredity*, p. 754.

⁹ H. E. Walter, *Genetics*, p. 211.

Amphipods of the Crustacea, *Gammarus chevreuxi*, 13; *G. annandalei*, 27
 Insects Trichoptera, *Limnophilus affinis*, 6; *L. stigma* and *L. flavicornis*, 30
 In the Lepidoptera, in the Geometridae, *Biston hirtaria*, 14; *B. zonaria*, 56
 Mammals, Rodentia, *Cricetus auratus*, 19; *C. griseus*, 7
 Roundworm, *Ascaris megalocephala univalens*, 1 pair
 Crayfish, *Cambarus virilis*, 200
 Geometrid moth, *Phigalia pedaria*, 224
 Birds usually have a high number of chromosomes. In some groups there is a great range of chromosome numbers.¹⁰

In the plants and vegetables the number of chromosomes in a cell likewise shows great variation:

Corn, 20

Lily, 24

Fern, *Pteris aquilana*, 64

Shield fern, *Aspidium*, 72

Onion, *Alpidium*, 8

Tobacco: *N. Digluta*, 72; *N. Tabacum*, 48; *N. glutinosa*, 24¹¹

In considering the above chromosome numbers for various plants and animals, notice the very wide range, from 1 pair to over 1,600. Among the mammals there is a range from 22 to 54. Would anyone suggest that dogs were the ancestors of man or the monkey by adding chromosomes because dogs have 22, man has 48 or 46, the monkey has 54? Could we say that horses (38) evolved from cats (36) and cats from dogs (22) by adding chromosomes? Did the insect *Diestrammena marmorata* (58) evolve from the fruit fly (8) and the fly from the aphid (6) simply by adding chromosomes? Did the moth *Phigalia pedaria* (224) evolve from the aphid (6) by adding a whole bunch of chromosomes? Among the plants did tobacco (72) evolve from the shield fern (72) or the shield fern from tobacco? Or did they both evolve from the lily (24), the lily from corn (20), and corn from the onion (8) by adding chromosomes? Of course all this is absurd! But it would be equally absurd to reverse the process and say that evolution occurred by the *loss* of chromosomes, for that would imply that man (48 or 46) evolved from the monkey (54) by the loss of chromosomes, the horse (38) evolved from man (48), cats (36) came from the horse (38), dogs (22) evolved from cats (36), while the *Aphis saliceti* (6) and the fruit fly (8) came from cats (36) or dogs (22)—all by the loss of chromosomes! Where do the

¹⁰ J. W. Klotz, *Genes, Genesis and Evolution*, pp. 272-274.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-274, 324, 75.

plants come into the picture? Corn has 20 chromosomes while tobacco has 72. Since the evolutionists claim that plants evolved before animals and that animals evolved from plants, just how can we fit such a picture of chromosome numbers together? They simply do not agree with any conceivable evolutionary tree as the evolutionists like to classify all life. Again we must point out that chromosomes are the very carriers of heredity upon which all life depends, so that if there has been evolution it should show in the chromosome numbers in some way or other. We can be very sure that were it possible to arrange the chromosome numbers in either an ascending or a descending order so that they corresponded to the alleged evolutionary tree, the evolutionists would be quick to point that fact out. It is this whole situation that led E. B. Wilson to say that the evolution of chromosome numbers "has taken place, on the whole, fitfully, irregularly, and in various ways."¹²

G. *The Genes*

Now of course the evolutionist will point out that it is the genes on the chromosomes that are concerned with heredity, not the chromosome number, so we must turn to a consideration of the genes.

T. H. Morgan and his associates discovered that the genes which control the heredity factors are located serially on the chromosomes, being so linked to them that each group of genes on a chromosome is inherited as a group, according to Mendel's Law. In the process that precedes the cell division of the germ cell, before the sperms or eggs are formed, the chromosomes arrange themselves in pairs, alongside each other. Ordinarily in the reduction cell division before the sperms or eggs are formed, one member of each matched pair of chromosomes goes into different germ cells, according to Mendel's Law, thus reducing the number of chromosomes in the sperm or egg cells by half the usual number. When the egg and sperm unite later, the total number of chromosomes is again complete with half the number coming from the germ cell of each parent.

Sometimes, however, at the time of the reduction cell division, various breaks occur in the paired chromosomes, either naturally or through the speeding up of the mutation processes by X rays, cosmic rays, rays from radioactive elements, or certain chemicals.¹³ It is thought that the deformities sometimes resulting from certain diseases, such as

¹² Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 868. Quoted by permission.

¹³ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

influenza or German measles, contracted by mothers during pregnancy occur through the destruction of certain genes or their injury. After the breaks in the chromosomes occur, the broken parts again unite according to the following patterns:

1. A part of one chromosome will unite with the end of the other chromosome of the matched pair.

2. Sections of the ends of both chromosomes of a pair will exchange places.

3. A section of one chromosome will be inserted between broken parts of the other matched chromosome.

4. A section of a chromosome will be broken off and inverted. The inverted part will then unite with the same chromosome, or with the end of the other chromosome, or perhaps be inserted in the middle or some other location of the matched chromosome.

5. Sometimes all the paired chromosomes will go into the same germ cell and on union of the cell with a normal germ cell the usual number of chromosomes will be increased by half. This produces *polyploidy* in plants and causes double flowers, giantism, and other mutations. One "important difficulty in the way of polyploidy being an important mechanism for evolution is the fact that it is limited almost exclusively to the flowering plants."¹⁴ Stebbins says that "the species originating by polyploidy are for the most part very similar to their diploid ancestors, both in their external morphology and in their preferences for certain ecological niches . . . or else in the case of allopolyploids, they contain recombinations of characteristics found in their ancestors."¹⁵ Stebbins says too that "it does not appear that progressive evolution is furthered by polyploidy."¹⁶ "It should be pointed out that chromosome number cannot be doubled indefinitely without harmful results. . . . It appears that for each species there is an optimum chromosome number, and that any increase beyond this optimum number is actually harmful."¹⁷ "Only polyploidy shows any promise as a mechanism for evolution. And in the final analysis it contributes nothing new. Moreover, it usually results in a substantial reduction in viability and fertility."¹⁸ It is thus seen that the only mechanism (polyploidy) which might be a

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

¹⁵ Stebbins, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

¹⁶ Stebbins, quoted by Klotz, p. 322.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

cause of evolution actually adds nothing in the way of new genes and therefore could not be a cause of evolution.

(1) In the first four of the above examples of what happens when a break occurs in a chromosome in the reduction cell division that precedes the formation of the sperm and eggs, the rearrangements of the genes produce mutations. Apparently the effect of the neighboring genes at the points of breakage and reunion causes the mutations. When a section of a chromosome with the included genes is lost to a germ cell by these crossings over, all the genes on the lost part are lost to the germ cell. All kinds of rearrangements produce all kinds of mutations, but the mutations are almost always, if not universally, harmful in some way to the individuals sustaining them. The Ancon sheep with a short-legged mutation "in keeping with our general experience with mutations was actually a harmful one to the sheep."¹⁹ This mutation was lost and then reappeared in the flock of a Norwegian farmer in 1935. "A large number of these mutations, however, will be lethal, killing the organism during the embryonic period."²⁰ "The chief difficulty in the way of evolution by mutation is the fact that most mutations are either lethal or semi-lethal. Either they kill the organism outright—in which case they are said to be lethal—or they are harmful in some way, so that in the ordinary course of events they would be eliminated."²¹

(2) Another difficulty in the way of mutations as a cause of evolution is that mutations are almost universally recessive.²² "In most forms mutations are generally recessive to the wild type."²³ Moreover, "even where the recessive gene is not obviously harmful it often reduces the viability and fertility rate to such a degree that it would soon be eliminated in nature."²⁴ Quoting Fisher and Haldane, Klotz says, "Even if a mutation confers some favorable quality, the chances are strongly against its survival in the species."²⁵ Referring to Ford, Klotz says, "Later on he goes so far as to say that it may be stated that no mutation has ever occurred in the progress of genetic work which is fully viable, and which behaves as a dominant to the wild gene type."²⁶

¹⁹ Klotz, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 285.

²² Ford, *Mendelism*, p. 44.

²³ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

(3) In addition to all the above statements Klotz quotes Romer as saying, "There is not only strong evidence from recent forms of the reversibility of evolution, but the paleontological evidence is conclusive."²⁷ Romer believes that the idea of the irreversibility of evolution can no longer be accepted. This idea would seem to be devastating to the theory of evolution by mutations, for it would mean that over vast periods of time, even if there seemed to be evolution, it would be only change in a cycle, with mutations taking the race upward for a time and then plunging it back into the previous forms so that there would be no real progressive evolution.

Now, while we have pointed out that known and analyzed mutations are due to the change of location of genes when a crossover occurs in the chromosomes, some geneticists believe that they are uncommon in nature. Quoting White, Klotz says, "These position effects are rather uncommon. While they do have striking effects when they occur, they probably occur so rarely that they can hardly contribute to the progress of evolution."²⁸ Quoting Stebbins, Klotz says, "The position effect in plants is so uncommon that it has relatively little importance in plant evolution."²⁹

(4) *Mutations as a mechanism for evolution.* The former enthusiasm for explaining evolution as caused by mutations has largely disappeared among geneticists today. "For one thing, most mutations are either lethal or semilethal. There is real doubt that any are really favorable. The chance, moreover, that a mutation will be preserved in the stock, even if favorable, is very slight."³⁰ "It is also evident that those mutants which do survive will probably have only a very slight effect on the form, since mutants with large effects are almost always lethal."³¹ Speaking of the effect of mutations on evolution as a whole Julian Huxley says, "It must be admitted that the direct and complete proof of the utilization of mutations in evolution under natural conditions has not yet been given."³² Coming from such a convinced evolutionist as Julian Huxley this is quite an admission.

A very pronounced difficulty in the way of regarding mutations as a mechanism for evolution is the fact that in order to have any real effect

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 299; A. S. Romer, pp. 109 ff.

²⁸ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 292; White, *Animal Cytology*, p. 60.

²⁹ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 292; Stebbins, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

³⁰ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

³² Julian Huxley, in Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

on progressive evolution there would have to be not one but a number of adaptive mutations along a definite progressive line. The chances of such a series of favorable mutations are so slight that it would seem almost impossible. Hooten points out this difficulty: "There are problems in a theory of multiple spontaneous variations transmitted by heredity and miraculously selected through surviving generations in such a way as to simulate direct morphological adaptation. . . . A complete dependence upon such a theory of evolution involves incredible absurdities."³³ Lindsey is therefore convinced that evolution has not been haphazard but directly adaptive at every step. In his view one cannot logically believe that it has come as a result of haphazard genetic changes or random mutations with an assumed preadaptive value.³⁴ That would seem to mean that the mind of a supervising God controls the whole alleged process of evolution. Viewing the whole subject of mutations as a means of evolution Klotz declares, "Goldschmidt is outspoken in his condemnation of mutations as a mechanism for evolution."³⁵

H. Problems for the Evolutionist

1. *The problem of specific adaptation.* In nature there are innumerable examples of the adaptation of animals or insects to plants that would appear to make it impossible for such adaptation to have originated by chance evolutionary processes. Here is almost conclusive proof that the directing hand of the Creator so fashioned them. One of the most striking examples of adaptation is given by Klotz in the case of the yucca moth and the yucca plant.

The yucca flowers hang down, and the pistil, or female part of the flower, is lower than the stamens, or male part. However, it is impossible for the pollen to fall from the anthers or pollen sacs to the stigma, the part of the pistil which receives the pollen, because the stigma is cup-shaped, and the section receptive to the pollen is on the inner surface of the cup. The female of the yucca moth (*Pronuba*) begins work soon after sundown. She collects a quantity of pollen from the anthers of the yucca plant and holds it in her specially constructed mouth parts. She then usually flies to another yucca flower, pierces the ovary with her ovipositor, and after laying one or more eggs, creeps down the style (the stalk of the pistil) and stuffs a ball of pollen into the stigma. The plant produces a large number of seeds. Some

³³ E. A. Hooten, *Up From the Apes*, p. 77.

³⁴ A. W. Lindsey, *Principles of Organic Evolution*.

³⁵ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 307; Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 205 ff.

of these are eaten by the larvae of the moth, and some mature to perpetuate the species.

It is difficult to imagine what would cause a moth to collect pollen and to stuff it into a stigma. One hesitates to believe that the female knows what the result will be and it is generally assumed that this is an example of instinctive behavior. . . . In the absence of the moth the yucca plant produces no seed, while without the yucca plant the moth cannot complete its life cycle. The moth larvae can feed only on the seeds of the yucca plant. Thus if the moth should fail to pollinate the yucca, the result would be the eventual extinction of both plant and insect.

How can this phenomenon be explained on the basis of evolution? Which came first, the yucca moth or the yucca plant? . . . Mayr says that it is a considerable strain on one's credulity to assume that finely balanced systems, such as the vertebrate eye or the feathers of birds, could develop by random mutations, and he goes on to say that this is even more true for situations such as the yucca-moth-yucca-plant relationship.³⁶

A similar situation is to be found in the relationship existing between the commercial fig and the wasps of the genus *Blastophaga*, which pollinate it. The flowers of the fig are produced in structures called syconia. Each of these consists of a hollow, fleshy receptacle with a very small opening at the upper end. There are numerous small flowers which line the inside of this hollow receptacle. Two kinds of syconia are produced. One contains both male and female flowers and is called a carpfig. It is not eaten. The other which produces edible figs has only female flowers. Pollination of both kinds of syconia is accomplished by the female wasps. The openings of the syconia are so nearly closed by overlapping scales that the wasps have great difficulty in getting in and usually tear off their wings in the process. After the female wasp has entered a syconium with both male and female flowers, she lays her eggs and dies. Her eggs hatch, and the young wasps feed on the tissues of the flower. . . . The male wasps eat their way out of the flowers . . . into those occupied by females. Here they mate. . . . The females then become dusted with pollen from the male flowers, make their way to the outside, and fly to another syconium. . . . If it is a syconium with female flowers only, the wasp dies without laying her eggs, for the flowers are so long that the female cannot get to the base of them to lay her eggs. In her attempts to do so she dusts these flowers with pollen. These female flowers develop into mature figs, which then may be eaten. . . . McDougall says that the course of evolution that has brought about such a strange relationship can scarcely be imagined.³⁷

2. *The earliest organisms according to evolutionists, and their persistence.* Most evolutionists think the earliest organisms were relatively

³⁶ Klotz, *op. cit.*, pp. 532-533; E. Mayr, *Systematics and the Origin of Species*, p. 296.

³⁷ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 533; W. B. McDougall, *Plant Ecology*, p. 87.

simple forms showing both animal and plant characteristics.³⁸ The plants are usually classified into four phyla, the animals into at least twenty phyla. Now, since the so-called simple organisms exist independently, "If evolution is correct and if the tendency of evolution is toward specialization and improvement, then those forms which are relatively simple, should be extinct. They should be unable to compete with more specialized forms which [it is alleged] have developed from them."³⁹ As a matter of fact, however, simple organisms have persisted down to the present time. Why should some of these simple forms have evolved into more highly specialized and complex organisms, while others not only successfully competed with the more highly specialized but continued to the present day? Lindsey asks why, "since single cells are capable of existing as independent organisms, living things have ever become more complex."⁴⁰ He tells us there is no answer to the question. As Klotz says, "If these supposedly primitive organisms show such a degree of specialization, or are capable of adaptation to such a wide variety of habitats, then we might wonder what incentive there is for evolution. Why should organisms evolve in such a way as to become less specialized in their individual cells and limit the variety of habitats which they can occupy? Certainly the algae, fungi, and bacteria are able to live under much wider temperature and acidity-alkalinity ranges than the higher plants."⁴¹ These questions pose what seem to be insuperable problems for the evolutionist. In Klotz's words, "It is generally believed that a form similar to *Euglena* was the link between plants and animals."⁴² This, however, is supposition based on the belief in evolution.

3. *The problem of the origin of protein.* One of the most serious problems for the evolutionist is the problem of the origin of the first protein. "At a time when life did not exist how did substances come into existence which today are absolutely essential to living systems and yet can *only be formed by those systems?*"⁴³ There is still no real answer to the problem of the origin of the first protein.⁴⁴ Proteins are the most complex compounds known. They are formed in nature only by living organisms. Yet those organisms themselves depend upon proteins

³⁸ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

³⁹ Lindsey, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 530.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 436.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 507.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 506.

already existent for their own existence! Blum says that the formation by chance of a polypeptid of the size of the smallest known protein seems beyond all probability.⁴⁵ *This would indicate that proteins cannot come into existence apart from already existent life, while life cannot come into existence apart from already existent protein!*

4. *The problem of the flowering plants.* After plant life has mysteriously (from an evolutionary point of view) come into existence; after proteins upon which life depends have also mysteriously come into existence, and we skip over many other problems for the evolutionist, we come to one which really stumps him. "One of the big problems of plant evolution and especially of the evolution of flowering plants, is the fact that the latter appear so suddenly in the geological record. . . . They appear in great variety and abundance in the late Cretaceous period. Darwin called their origin an 'abominable mystery,' and most evolutionists today still agree. It is generally assumed that they must have originated earlier, not because fossils have been found, but because it is inconceivable [from an evolutionary standpoint] that they should have originated so suddenly."⁴⁶ Scott says, according to Klotz, "The fossil history of the flowering plants shows no sign of a beginning, for with few exceptions all the specimens can be referred to families still existing."⁴⁷ Klotz later says in speaking of these and many other problems for the evolutionist, "There are other reasons, too, for questioning the very possibility of evolution. Is it possible for living things really to change and improve? In the inorganic world we know that most of the elements form closed cycles. . . . It would be very unusual to find a principle in the organic world that was quite different from the principles holding in the inorganic world. If the inorganic world is characterized by closed cycles, there is reason for wondering whether living organisms can really evolve. Will they not rather show a cycle of variation within a limited range?"⁴⁸ For example, hybridization merely provides a new combination of genes and characters already present in the ancestors.⁴⁹

The story of evolution as a whole is really filled with hypotheses and speculation.⁵⁰ The fossils, abundant as they are, give no evidence for tracing the development of the various organs in an organism. That

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 507; H. F. Blum, *Time's Arrow and Evolution*, p. 170.

⁴⁶ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; D. H. Scott, *Extinct Plants and Problems of Evolution*, p. 42.

⁴⁸ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 546.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 497.

depends upon the hypothesis of the truth of evolution. Even such a convinced evolutionist as Julian Huxley says that "the elaborate trees and other diagrams of arrangement proposed for various groups are largely contradictory *inter se* and must be regarded as highly speculative."⁵¹ As Klotz says, "It is important to realize that these problems do exist, lest the impression be created that evolution gives a perfect answer to the organic world as we know it and that only the Biblical doctrine of special creation presents problems."⁵²

5. *The gap between the invertebrates and the vertebrates.* One of the most serious problems for the evolutionist is the fact that in the fossil records there is a tremendous gap between the invertebrates and the vertebrates (animals having backbones). The body plan of the invertebrates is very different from that of the vertebrates. "None of the invertebrates has anything which remotely resembles the vertebral column, one of the outstanding characteristics of the vertebrates."⁵³ It seems impossible that such a complex structure as the vertebral column should have appeared suddenly in the chain of evolution. There should have been something in the record of the fossils of invertebrates that would at least hint at a vertebral column. We may well say at this point regarding the alleged history of pre-vertebrates what Klotz says regarding the evolution of invertebrates: "In reviewing the various theories of invertebrate evolution, one can readily see that many of the conclusions are extremely hypothetical. There is little evidence for many of the statements that are made with regard to the course of evolution of the invertebrates. Actually much of it is based on what has been accepted as general evolutionary principles. One of these . . . is the idea that evolution must have proceeded from the simple to the complex."⁵⁴ In regard to this gap between the fossil records of invertebrates and vertebrates, the same thing holds. From the evolutionary point of view there *must* have been forms between the vertebrates and the invertebrates, even though they cannot be found as fossils, because the evolutionary theory *demand*s it!

I. *Alleged Evolution of Horse and Man*

1. *The evolution of the horse.* In closing this section on biology we must mention two of the favorite "proofs" that evolution has occurred, whatever may have been the cause. These examples pertain to geology

⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Huxley, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

⁵² Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 501.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

as well as biology. The first is the alleged evolution of the horse. Many biology textbooks contain pictures of the five-toed *Eohippus* of Tertiary times, of the four-toed *Orohippus*, and the later and larger *Meshippus*. The pictures always include the horse, *Equus*, as the summit of the evolutionary process. By arranging the pictures in an ascending scale, the impression is given that each evolved from the other smaller and "lower" form of the horse. As far as the positive evidence goes, there is nothing to show any real connection between them. We must always remember that *fossils cannot prove genetic relationship*. The animals which produced the fossils are all dead. How can genetic relationship between different fossils be proved without assuming the thing to be proved, namely, that the evolutionary theory is true? Even if the theory were true, there is no way of proving that one fossil is the ancestor of another fossil. This is particularly the case with fossils which are as different as the five-toed *Eohippus* and the four-toed *Orohippus* or the *Meshippus*. The mere fact that they can be arranged in an ascending scale does not prove genetic relationship. They might have existed at the same time without leaving a record in the fossils.

But assuming that there was such a genetic relationship (which we do not admit) it would be only an example of ordinary mutations, by the *loss* of genes for producing toes, for the *Eohippus* had five toes and the horse of today has only one. The one-toed *Equus* has *lost* the genes for producing the five toes of the *Eohippus* if it is really a descendant of the *Eohippus*. Such a loss is not progressive evolution, for the evolutionist must account for the five original toes of the *Eohippus*. It is true that there is a great difference in size between the two, but so is there a great difference in size between the modern Shetland pony and the great truck horse of today. Size depends on Mendelian factors and selective breeding, which could not exist in the natural state.

2. *The alleged evolution of man*. For many years it was popular to say that man is a descendant of the monkey or one of the other primates such as the apes or chimpanzees. Of course evolutionists today make no such claim.⁵⁵ They believe that there was a common ancestor of all the primates, though Klotz says, "Most authorities believe that man himself started as a small ground ape and developed from this form."⁵⁶ As Hooten points out, however, one difficulty with such a theory is that

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

a small ape would have little chance of surviving among larger animals.⁵⁷ But in the museums of natural history and in the textbooks, even those used in grade schools, it is common to picture various alleged fossil men and their ancestors as brutes very like apes. What people who view such pictures or the restorations in the American Museum of Natural History do not realize is that they are merely the products of the imagination of evolutionary artists. The fossils which are found in researches by geologists are fragmentary bones, usually only a few bones. It is impossible to tell with any degree of accuracy what the original being looked like. Weidenreich says that all human fossils and modern man belong to the same species, *Homo sapiens*.⁵⁸ Mayr does not go quite as far, but he reduces all these fossils to one genus and three species,⁵⁹ all of them, however, recognized to be very similar.

a. Much has been made of differences in *teeth and teeth structure* among the fossils, but "Hooten criticizes severely conclusions that are reached from tooth and tooth structure."⁶⁰ Similarly, the size of the brain "is no criterion of intelligence."⁶¹

b. Klotz points out that "man presents a great many other problems for the evolutionist. Indeed . . . his method of evolution is supposed to have been entirely different from that of other organisms. . . . The problem for man is to explain the fact that he is so remarkably uniform. Man is a fairly numerous species. He is found in all parts of the earth. And yet human beings are very much alike. In spite of racial differences man is much more uniform than the average natural species."⁶² Then there are a large number of characteristics of man that are entirely different from those of even the higher primates. Klotz lists at least forty-five *characteristics not present in the anthropoid apes*.⁶³ Cook has a remarkable paragraph cited by Klotz, on the complexity of the human brain.

The cerebral cortex is believed to contain from 12 billion to 15 billion neurons. On the basis of 12 billion neurons the number of possible synaptic pathways in the cerebrum is estimated to be $1 \times 10^{15,000,000}$ —a fantastic figure. Cook says the nervous system is essentially an intricate electrical

⁵⁷ Hooten, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁵⁸ Weidenreich, *Apes, Giants and Man*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Ernst Mayr, *Taxonomic Categories of Fossil Hominids*, pp. 112-115.

⁶⁰ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 351-353.

system, the degree of complexity of which is hard to imagine. A Pentagon building, he says, would hardly be large enough to house a computing machine with as many synapses as are found in the human brain. All the power developed at Grand Coulee would be needed to operate such a "think factory." All the water of the Columbia River would be needed to dissipate the heat produced and keep its operating temperature down so it would not burst into flames. Even such a machine would not perform such higher mental functions as imagination and intuition.⁶⁴

J. *The Ape-Men*

1. The fossils of various creatures that are called "*ape-men*" have been found in various parts of the world. The most important are the so-called Pithecanthropus I, II, III, IV; Australopithecus; Sinanthropus; the Heidelberg man; the Cro-Magnon man; the Neanderthal man; and the Piltdown man. An interesting fact is that the so-called Piltdown man is now known to be a fraud very ingeniously put together.⁶⁵ It must be remembered that most of these finds do not represent whole skeletons but are merely skulls, various other bones, teeth, etc. As previously quoted, Weidenreich believes that all these fossils (eliminating the Piltdown man) are fossils of true human beings, in spite of their differences of bone structure, size of teeth, small cranial capacity, and other features.⁶⁶ Some of the bones of the Pithecanthropus, however, are now thought to be the bones of other primates, not human at all.⁶⁷

(1) Perhaps the most interesting of these discoveries is that of the Australopithecus. Dr. Raymond A. Dart, of the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, discovered skulls and bones from a mine of the Northern Lime Company, at Taungs in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The first skull he found was embedded in breccia (an agglomerate deposit of debris and lime). After laboriously chipping it free from the rock, he identified it as a skull of an infant, which he thought to be that of an ape-man or man-ape, intermediate between apes and man.⁶⁸ Dr. W. K. Gregory, of the American Museum of Natural History, declared before the Associated Scientific and Technical Societies of South Africa (1938) that "It is the missing link no longer missing. It is the structural connecting link between ape and man."⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 544; Cook, *Human Fertility: The Modern Dilemma*, pp. 194 ff.

⁶⁵ Klotz, *op. cit.*, pp. 365, 367, 368, 369.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 387; Hooten, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

⁶⁷ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

⁶⁸ Raymond A. Dart, *Adventures with the Missing Link*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

(2) Other investigators later found skulls of adult males and females from the same race. Dart discovered that the race had used weapons and tools made of chipped or splintered bones. "They not only had culture; they had devised the saws, scrapers, axes, poniards and digging tools that served mankind until very recent times."⁷⁰ Later he declared, "What is devastating to contemplate is . . . that there was so little improvement upon their basic tool inventions until aurignacian times (for about three quarters of a million years)."

(3) Dart thought that the race existed about a million years ago and was a genuine "missing link" between apes and men. His book has many fanciful drawings of what he and others thought the people of that race looked like. Naturally the faces are apelike in features, but we must remember that the artists were prepossessed with the idea that they were depicting ape-men and made the pictures accordingly. All such reconstructions are imaginary,⁷¹ for we have no way of knowing what the flesh and skins looked like.

(4) As a matter of fact the actual bone weapons and tools show so much skill in construction that it is hard to believe the artisans who made them were not genuine human beings. That these fossil remains come from a period of a million or more years ago is another matter.

(5) The age when these beings lived is difficult to determine from the strata in which the fossils are found. They seem to be very old, but it must be remembered that mankind has been burying its dead for ages, from before the dawn of human history. The fact that the rocks in which the human fossils are now found are dated millions of years ago would not *prove* that (a) the rocks themselves were actually deposited millions of years ago, or (b) even though the rocks were actually that old, the human fossils also date from the same period. Even were the rocks originally deposited millions of years ago, the human remains must date from a later period for it takes time for them to become fossils and *the rocks were already there* when the human remains were laid down. Then there is almost always the possibility that the bones have been disturbed by natural causes as well as by burial.⁷² Even when rocks surrounding fossils contain radioactive materials that can be dated by various "time clocks" millions of years ago, the material may have been metamorphosed at various times in the past, before the fossils were deposited.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁷¹ Hooten, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

⁷² Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

(6) There is one very important fact concerning the various fossil men. Nothing indicates that evolution has played any part in the development of man, for these fossils all represent human beings.⁷³ Klotz says, "We have not had evolution in man but we have had degeneration and deterioration."⁷⁴ There is nothing in the record of fossil man to contradict the teaching in the Bible that man was created by God.

K. *The Age of the Earth*

Naturally the question of *the age of the earth and the age of the fossils* is an important one and basic to the whole question of evolution. According to Patrick M. Hurley, ". . . the protoplanets reduced to planets about 5 billion years ago; the chemical separations within the terrestrial planets and parent bodies of the meteorites occurred 4.5 billion years ago; and the formation of a lasting earth crust started 2.8 billion years ago. . . . It is almost incomprehensible that only a few billion years ago our galaxy was born in a giant bomb flash of nuclear energy. What an inspiring picture of the process of creation!"⁷⁵ This estimate agrees with the estimate by Lawrence Kulp: "We know, as none of our human predecessors could have known with any assurance, that this is a tremendously old earth that we live on, a 4.5 billion-year-old earth. We know that it probably came together out of the dusts of space and that it has sorted itself into a crust, a mantle, and a core."⁷⁶ Of course this in no way contradicts the first few verses of the first chapter of Genesis, for no time schedule is there included.

(1) The way in which the age of the earth is determined is by a number of time scales found in the radioactive rocks. Not only does uranium break down to form lead at a definite rate that can be determined by modern scientists, but thorium²³² breaks down and forms lead²⁰⁸, rubidium⁸⁷ breaks down and forms strontium⁸⁷, and potassium⁴⁰ breaks down into argon⁴⁰, thus giving us several definite time clocks.⁷⁷ All these various "time clocks" in the rocks themselves agree in arriving at the approximate age of the earth as 4.5 billion years.

⁷³ Weidenreich, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁷⁴ Klotz, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

⁷⁵ Patrick M. Hurley, *How Old Is the Earth?* pp. 151-152.

⁷⁶ J. Lawrence Kulp, *The Age of the Earth*, in *The Earth We Live On*, edited by Ruth Moore, p. 408.

⁷⁷ J. Lawrence Kulp, *Isotopic Dating and Geologic Time Scales*, in *The Crust of the Earth*, edited by E. Dorf, pp. 609-629.

(2) Now geologists date the rocks in which the oldest fossils are found (Cambrian strata) at between 500 million and 600 million years ago. This leaves a gap of nearly 4 billion years between the time of the formation of the earth and the deposition of the "oldest" fossils. "Pre-Cambrian rocks have been diligently searched for fossil remains, particularly in the middle latitudes, yet the results are extremely meager. This has been difficult to explain since the marine fossil record is so well represented in the Cambrian."⁷⁸

(3) It is this difficulty that has led evolutionary geologists to declare that from two-thirds to three-fourths of the whole evolutionary process took place before any organic life was deposited as fossils. Even the simplest forms of life found as fossils in the Cambrian strata are so complex in structure that, according to the evolutionists, there must have been development over millions of years previous to Cambrian times to account for them. The only objective evidence for the existence of such life in the pre-Cambrian times is that graphite is found in the rocks of the Primitive age, and that trilobites are found in the *kolm* rocks from Scandinavia. The latter point will be discussed later. It is held that the graphite is evidence that life existed then even though no fossils are found in the Primitive rocks (except the above-mentioned trilobites).

(4) As a matter of fact the presence of graphite in the pre-Cambrian rocks in no way proves that life existed on the earth at that time. The renowned authority on "sealed systems," Dr. Edward Smith Gilfillen, a Ph.D. from Harvard University in physical chemistry, Sheldon Fellow of Harvard University, and National Research Fellow, and at present head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Lowell Technological Institute, declares as follows: "The existence of graphite in pre-Cambrian rocks in no way implies the existence of living things at the time these rocks were formed, because there are well-known chemical processes quite independent of life which could have produced this graphite."⁷⁹ The importance of the point cannot be overemphasized. The supposition that most of the evolutionary process started in the pre-Cambrian ages is based almost entirely on the presence of graphite in the pre-Cambrian rocks. Dr. Gilfillen's statement destroys the whole body of alleged evidence for life on the earth in pre-Cambrian times,

⁷⁸ R. A. Stirton, *Time, Life and Man: The Fossil Record*.

⁷⁹ This quotation is from a dictated and signed statement of Dr. Edward Smith Gilfillen, Ph.D., now in the possession of the present author. Dr. Gilfillen heard this whole section read to him and gave his unqualified approval to it.

for graphite can originate from "well-known chemical processes quite independent of life." Just one illustration of the origination of graphite quite apart from all life, according to Dr. Gilfillen, is found in the fact that graphite and carbides arise in sealed systems, from cyanide and cyanate in the presence of an electric arc. The fact that graphite is found in the pre-Cambrian rocks thus in no way proves that life existed at that time, and the assumption that there was evolution during that period has no foundation in evidence.

(5) But one of the most disturbing facts from an evolutionary point of view is that *all* the animal phyla except Bryozoa and Chordata (which both appear in the next, the Ordovician, period) occur in numbers in the Cambrian, the first period in which fossils have been discovered. Elliott declares:

Evidence of living things appears for the first time in the Cambrian rocks, and strange as it may seem, occurs here in great abundance. This must mean that once evolution started, it went forth with a burst of speed from the very beginning, because fossils are found in all the periods following the Cambrian. There is very little proof that animals lived in pre-Cambrian times. . . . It seems incredible, however, that hard parts would appear almost spontaneously and simultaneously in a large variety of forms. Assuming that they did, all the groups would very shortly acquire the character or perish in accordance with the law of selection. This might conceivably account for the sudden appearance of the ancestors of all modern phyla in this very early period of geologic history.

Most, if not all, of the major phyla have left fossil remains in the Cambrian, which lasted 60 million to 90 million years. . . . Each of the principal phyla represents a distinct level of anatomical organization. . . . It will be seen that each of the principal phyla today started in the Cambrian . . . all of the original phyla have living representatives today, and all of them are more numerous than in Cambrian times.⁸⁰

(6) J. Brough says, "It thus seems likely that all phyla . . . were already in existence in the Cambrian, and that in the vast period of time that has elapsed since then, no new phyla have been evolved."⁸¹ If all the major phyla were present in the Cambrian period, is it not more reasonable to believe that God created them at that time than that they evolved previously but left no geological record of their existence? If all major animal phyla were already in existence in the

⁸⁰ Alfred M. Elliott, *Zoology*, pp. 628-629.

⁸¹ J. Brough, "Time and Evolution," in *Studies on Fossil Vertebrates*, edited by T. S. Westoll, p. 14.

Cambrian period and no new phyla have evolved since then, how can there be any true evolution, even if we were to agree with the successive age theory?

(7) Geologists have arranged charts depicting the geological ages that they believe have existed on the earth since fossils were formed in the earliest age. All over the earth we find strata of rocks deposited in water as sediments, superimposed one layer over another. Most strata were laid down in water. Animals and plants were buried in these sediments and in time became fossils. Geologists declare that there were four geological ages, the Palaeozoic, the Mesozoic, the Tertiary, and the latest, called the Quaternary. They say that each age had several periods, from the Cambrian down to the Glacial, the Champlain, and the Recent periods. Each period, they claim, lasted several million years, and an evolutionary process carried the stream of life upward from the lowest forms of life, the invertebrates, through fishes and insects, amphibians and plants, reptiles, birds, mammals, and at last to man. The evolutionists claim that this whole process took about 500 million to 600 million years.

L. *How Are the Fossils Dated?*

A vitally important question arises at this point. *How are the fossils dated?* How are these figures of 500 million to 600 million years since the first fossils are said to have been deposited determined?

(1) Can these dates be established by the radioactive "time clocks" of uranium to lead, etc., so that we can know when the various fossils were formed? Not only have the radioactive materials probably gone through a number of metamorphoses in the past, when they were dissolved and washed or leached away to other locations, so that we are not dealing with undisturbed rocks, but, as J. Lawrence Kulp says, "Nearly all uranium ores occur in masses that have intruded into unstratified rocks, and afford no evidence of where they stand in the geological sequence."⁸² In other words, it is impossible to date the surrounding fossil-bearing strata by the radioactive material, since the latter was intruded into them. Kulp goes on to say that in Scandinavia fossils are found in radioactive rocks called *kolm*: "... the fossils embedded in the *kolm* are trilobites and other forms that trace back to the early stages of life on this earth or at least to its first appearance in the rocks. . . . On the 206/238 test the *kolm* gave an age of 380,000,000

⁸² Kulp, "The Crust of the Earth," p. 394.

years; on 207/235 an age of 440,000,000 years and on the 207/206 determination one of 800,000,000 years."

Now notice first of all that practically all uranium-bearing material has "intruded into unstratified rocks," so that there is no age relationship between the radioactive intruded mass and the surrounding stratum or unstratified rocks. *It can therefore offer no evidence as to the age of the fossils.*

The radioactive *kolm* from the Scandinavian countries does contain fossil trilobites and other forms, but that does not mean that the fossils are as old as the *kolm* itself. The very fact that the *kolm* contains these fossils renders the alleged great age of the *kolm* highly suspect. Uranium salts are soluble in water, and it is quite probable that after the trilobites were deposited in the sediment which was to form the *kolm*, the *kolm* was permeated by water-borne radioactive salts. Moreover, if the radioactive *kolm* was already there when fossil trilobites were deposited in the sediment, there would be no way of telling how long a time had elapsed between the formation of the radioactive *kolm* and the deposition of the fossil trilobites. The radioactivity of the *kolm* would thus offer no evidence as to the age of the trilobites now embedded in it.

The fact that radioactivity in the rocks cannot help us determine the age of the fossils is pointed out by Frederick E. Zeuner: "In particular, sedimentary rocks laid down in water, ice or wind, are, as a rule, unsuitable [i.e., for radioactive age determination]. If there are any radioactive particles in them, these must of necessity be older than the deposit itself."⁸³

(2) Unfortunately the Carbon¹⁴ method cannot give age information beyond 20,000 or 30,000 years.⁸⁴ Even within these dates it is not certain that the Carbon¹⁴ method is really reliable. Of course when we are dealing with hundreds of years, even as far back as 2,000 or 3,000 years, the margin of error can be well determined as a rough estimate. But notice the assumptions that must be made when the scientists try to determine ages beyond that. It is assumed that Carbon¹⁴ has always been formed at the constant rate and decayed at the rate that can now be accurately determined in the Columbia University nuclear laboratory. But how can we be sure that the cosmic rays producing the Nitrogen¹⁴ which changes almost immediately into Carbon¹⁴ have *always* been constant at the present rate? Then, the magnetic field of the earth is

⁸³ Frederick E. Zeuner, *Dating the Past*, p. 323.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

subject to diurnal variation and probably to long-term variation, so that there is the possibility that the magnetic field was different in the past. Most important of all, it must be assumed that nuclear activity has not been greater in the atmosphere of the earth than it is at present. The nuclear bomb explosions in the past few years have complicated the Carbon¹⁴ tests, so that error in reckoning has been vastly increased. How can it safely be assumed that there have never been nuclear explosions from the interior of the earth or from somewhere in the galaxy in the past? Had there been such an increase in nuclear activity in the past, it would affect the rate of formation and decay of Carbon¹⁴ and the present time tests would be affected. However reliable the Carbon¹⁴ tests may be, they offer no help in determining the age of the fossils.

(3) Can we date the fossils by the relative degree of *crystallization of the rocks* containing the fossils? Geologists all admit that the rocks of the most "recent" geological period may be fully crystallized and may resemble in every respect the rocks of the so-called "oldest" age, while the rocks of the so-called "oldest" period may be found uncrystallized.

(4) *Superposition* determines the relative sequence of the rocks. "The basic idea of stratigraphical work is the law of superposition, meaning that, unless displacements occurred after deposition, a layer (b) covering a layer (a) must be younger than (a). Thus it has been found possible to establish a succession of strata from the earliest known to the latest."⁸⁵ This statement by Zeuner puts the whole matter of dating the rocks fairly clearly. Of course we need to ask how it can be determined that the upper stratum was deposited millions of years after the stratum immediately below it was deposited. Some erosion or surface deposition of other matter on the lower stratum may be evident, but that would not necessarily indicate the passage of millions of years between the strata. This brings us to the heart of the matter. After all, *it is the fossils contained in the various strata that in the last analysis determine the age of the rocks*. Zeuner makes this clear in another place: "The pleistocene chronology of most countries involved is in such an embryonic state that dating is hardly more than an act of reasonable guessing, *mostly on a palaeontological basis*."⁸⁶ That is, the fossils embedded in the rocks determine the age of the rocks! E. Dorf says that "fossils became acknowledged as the most reliable—though not necessarily

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 282 (italics mine). Cf. A. W. Grabau, *Principles of Stratigraphy*, p. 1103.

infallible—indicators of geologic age.”⁸⁷ Zeuner also says, “. . . here it is sufficient to note that the main divisions of stratigraphy are defined by the dominant forms of life contained.”⁸⁸ A word of explanation of the term “dominant forms of life” is necessary to understand the method of dating the rocks by the fossils they contain. It is done on a percentage basis. If a stratum contains a larger percentage of fossils characteristic of, for example, the Cretaceous period than of any other period, then that stratum is declared to belong to the Cretaceous period. In the same way the rocks are dated for other geological periods in the successive ages scheme. But the dating of the rocks really thus becomes a matter of subjective judgment of the paleontologist.

(5) How can it be determined that fossils in one stratum are *older than* fossils in another stratum in distant lands? Of course if one stratum is actually found over another stratum, the first stratum was probably deposited *after* the stratum now found under it was deposited. But without assuming the truth of evolution there would be no way of knowing *how long* after the second stratum was deposited the one now on top was laid down. But if there is no such direct *in situ* relationship between the two strata, the only way the relative age can be determined is by the fossils contained in them. If the dominant fossils in stratum (a) are lower in the evolutionary scheme than the fossils in stratum (b) in a distant place, the fossils in (a) are declared to be older (perhaps many millions of years) than the fossils in (b), though the two strata may be continents apart.

Is this not in reality arguing in a circle—that is, using the conclusion to prove the premise? The thing the geologist sets out to prove is that life has evolved through a process of evolution over a time span of hundreds of millions of years, through successive geological ages. When the rocks are thus dated by the fossils they contain, is he not using the assumption that there has been evolution to prove that there have been successive geological ages? Then is not the successive age theory used to prove that evolution has occurred? The geologist is trying to prove that all life evolved from simple organisms to more complex organisms by the fossils in the rocks. But the fossils in the rocks are dated by their relative position in the evolutionary scale. Reduced to a syllogism their reasoning would seem to be as follows: The successive age theory is true because the fossils prove it. The fossils prove evolution

⁸⁷ Dorf, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

⁸⁸ Zeuner, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

because there have been successive ages in geological history! In other words, the fossils prove evolution, and evolution proves the date of the fossils. The conclusion proves the premise!

But when we are dealing with the strata in just one place is the evolutionary argument any stronger? Suppose we have a certain number of strata in one place: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, etc., containing fossils of alleged different geological periods. Is there any way of proving that the fossils in the upper layer (a) lived millions of years *after* the life forms found as fossils in a lower (g) stratum, even though it is now found on top of stratum (g)? Might not the forms of life in both strata have been living at the same time and just happen to have left more fossil remains in one stratum than in the other? Or might not the stratum in the upper layer have been deposited in a catastrophe that followed the other catastrophe by only a few decades or centuries, so that the forms of life found now as fossils lived at approximately the same time? How can the times of the catastrophes be determined without assuming the truth of evolution?

We must probably admit that life has been on the earth longer than orthodox Christians have been in the habit of assuming, for how otherwise can one explain the eighteen successive forests that are found as fossils in Yellowstone Park, one forest on top of another, separated by layers of lava?⁸⁹ These strata would seem to indicate that when one forest perished and became fossils through a volcanic eruption, another forest grew in the soil formed over the previous fossil forest. But that such instances prove the lapse of millions of years is an entirely different matter. Even allowing two or three hundred years between each of the forests, the process would take only a few thousand years.

Even from an evolutionary point of view, arranging an evolutionary sequence of life is largely a subjective matter. In the *American Scientist* for June, 1961 (pp. 240-244), there is a most instructive review of a book by G. A. Kerkut. The review was written by an evolutionist, John Tyler Bonner. "The particular truth is simply that we have no reliable evidences as to the evolutionary sequence of invertebrate phyla. We do not know what group arose from what other group. . . . One can find

⁸⁹ "Geology and the Bible," in *Modern Science and the Christian Faith*, by Edwin K. Gedney, Professor of Science, Gordon College, pp. 36-37 and Figures 5 and 6. A cross section of Specimen Ridge, Yellowstone National Park, shows eighteen layers of fossil forests, one on top of another. After each forest grew and matured, it was then destroyed and buried by repeated volcanic eruptions. This must have happened over some centuries at least.

qualified, professional arguments for any group being the descendant of almost any other." Speaking of Kerkut's argument Bonner says, "He discusses the biochemical evidence for affinities between groups. . . . Apparently if one reads the original papers . . . the affinities become extremely clouded indeed." And then, speaking more generally, the reviewer goes on (p. 242): "In the case of phylogeny our text-books are little help; in fact they are, as a rule, a *festering mass of unsupported assertions*. . . . The prime source of further facts is bound to come from palaeontology . . . it must be admitted that with each fact comes the problem of interpretation and all its accompanying uncertainty." Bonner concludes as follows: "The message is that the great phylogenetic schemes . . . must wait. They must wait because our present evidence is inadequate to decide between schemes." (*Italics mine.*)

The above quotations point up the fact that the relative order of rocks and the fossils is puzzling even when they are classified on the usual schematization, for in some instances closer study has changed the relative order from that previously accepted. When the fossils of one stratum found over another are strikingly different, the conclusion is that only the passage of millions of years could account for such a difference, in order to allow time for evolutionary processes to work. But the fact that *all* the phyla are found in the earliest strata is an indication that evolutionary arguments based on the relative order of the rocks may be mistaken.

For the sake of argument, however, let us assume that there has been no evolution, and that all the plants and animals were created at approximately the same time, allowing for the changes brought about by Mendelian crosses and mutations, which dealt only with the genes originally created. If that were the case, might not some animals and plants be found in one location and not in another? The fact that some plants or animals are not found as fossils in one period, embedded in a stratum, would not prove that other forms of life did not exist on the earth somewhere else at the time of the deposition of the stratum in question. They might even have existed in that very neighborhood at that time, or perhaps in a distant part of the same country. Various catastrophes might have produced the strata in one place, with only a relatively short time intervening. If there has been no evolution, millions of years would not be needed to account for the different fossils in the different strata.

Moreover, when the evolutionists assume that the forms of life found

as fossils in the Cambrian strata were the only forms of life on the earth at that time, are they really not assuming that the various strata over the whole world are like the skins of an onion, each skin representing only the forms of life over the whole world at that particular time? As a matter of fact, since *all* the phyla have representatives in the earliest strata of fossil-bearing rocks, why could it not have been possible that all the species existed on the earth somewhere in so-called Cambrian times? Even today we find certain animals and plants in only one country, and certain other plants and animals only in other countries. Is it not natural to assume that the same conditions existed in the geological past?

(6) *Thrust faults*. The present writer has for many years held that the "thrust fault" theory is very doubtful. This theory seeks to account for the fact that in many places on the earth's surface so-called "younger" rocks are found *under* so-called "older" strata. The "older" rocks, says the theory, were pushed for long distances over the "younger" ones. It seems difficult to believe that even the forces of the slowly forming crust of the earth could push one set of rocks over another set of rocks for great distances. For instance, one standard textbook of geology states that a section of the Alps in northern Italy and Switzerland contains such a "thrust fault," and that one set of "older" rocks was pushed over another set of "younger" rocks for a *distance of sixty miles!* Another explanation is that a "younger" set of rocks was pushed *under* the "older" set of rocks. Practically the only evidence for this theory is that the rocks on top now contain "older" fossils than the ones below! Would it not seem much more likely that the rocks were deposited in the relative order in which they now are found?

But let us again assume, for the sake of argument, that the rocks were deposited in the order claimed by the evolutionary geologists, with "thrust faults" pushing some strata over or under other strata for long distances. Would that relative order of the rocks prove (a) that evolution has taken place or (b) that millions of years passed between the deposition of the different strata? Is not practically the only argument for the passage of those millions of years between the strata the assumption that it must take millions of years for the evolutionary changes to take place? If there has been no evolution, then the millions of years would not be needed. We frankly admit that many changes have taken place within the different phyla through mutations and inheritance

according to Mendel's Law, but mutations take place suddenly and do not need millions of years. We call attention again to the fact that all the phyla are found in the earliest geological ages. Does not that fact really undermine the whole theory of evolution? The evolutionary geologists' claim that two-thirds or three-fourths of all evolutionary changes took place before the earliest fossil-bearing rocks were deposited would seem to be based on the assumption that there *must* have been evolution, for all the fossils found in the Cambrian period are too complex in structure to have arisen *de novo* through evolutionary processes in that particular period. But creation by God at that time would be an adequate explanation of the facts, without the passage of all those millions of years. If God created the genera or the species, the millions of years would be unnecessary. (Of course, the idea of progressive creation would be an adequate explanation if there was such a passage of time.) But after all, the only real argument for such a long lapse of time is the necessity of allowing periods great enough for the evolutionary processes to do their work.

If God did not create all the genera at the same time, perhaps He used mutations as the tools for preparing the different species from the genera and phyla. As we have pointed out, mutations appear suddenly and therefore do not need millions of years in which to develop. They may have been more numerous in early times than the present evidence would seem to indicate, though nothing has come to light up to the present to prove that there have been "progressive" mutations.

Some geologists, it is true, explain mutations as being produced by the altering of the genes themselves, but L. J. Stadler holds that in such a large number of instances what seemed like a gene change proved to be a change produced by a rearrangement of genes on the chromosome that it is very doubtful whether any mutations are produced by real gene changes.⁹⁰ Stadler asserts that no genes can be proved to have changed. We again call attention to the fact that most mutations are harmful or lethal in the organism in which they occur. Moreover, all evidence so far discovered indicates that, when mutations occur, the genes involved were already in existence in the ancestors.

Even from an evolutionary point of view the problem of the various genera and species appearing in the respective periods is a puzzling one. As G. G. Simpson says, "... it remains true, as every paleontologist

⁹⁰ L. J. Stadler, *Science in Progress*, p. 24.

knows, that most new species, genera, and families, and that nearly all new categories above the level of families appear in the record suddenly and are not led up to by known gradual completely continuous transitional sequences.”⁹¹ The fact that all the phyla appear in the earliest geological ages, coupled with what Simpson points out—that the species, genera, and families apparently have been separate according to the geological records in the fossils—would seem to be a clear indication that all the various ages and periods were in actuality one and the same period. In other words, God created them all at approximately the same time, with no “transitional sequences” between the various “kinds.”

The fact that many “higher species” have not been discovered in the Cambrian rocks would not necessarily prove that “higher species” were not in existence at that time. They may have existed somewhere else and left no fossil remains. Of course, the evolutionary geologists claim that the statistics of the fossils of the species discovered disprove the existence of the “higher” forms of life at that time. But again we would point out, the fact that the “higher” forms of life have not to date been discovered in Cambrian strata does not *prove* that they did not exist during that period in other parts of the earth. For example, it was formerly claimed that fish did not exist in the Cambrian period, but a fossil fish is now in the geological museum of Princeton University, dating, it is said, from the Cambrian period.

(7) *What caused the fossils?* The evidence seems to be against the assertion that *all* the fossils were formed solely from the Biblical flood in the time of Noah, whether we accept the view of a universal flood at that time or not. The probability of a number of great catastrophes before then would appear more logical. What those catastrophes were it is impossible to say. Certainly some of them were sudden and devastating, so that animals were buried before they decayed (as witness the animals found in the frozen soil of Siberia, and the fishes found in the Devonian strata in the British Isles, where the evidence is that they died suddenly in agony). Those catastrophes probably occurred before the dawn of human history, which leads us to the view that possibly the creative days in the first chapter of Genesis were separated in time and represent periods rather than days of twenty-four hours’ length, following immediately after each other, though the latter view is the most logical one.

⁹¹ G. G. Simpson, *The Major Features of Evolution*, p. 360.

II. CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion from Facts of Biology and Genetics

We have examined at length the kinds of variations in organic life and have not discovered any of them capable of producing evolution. From an evolutionary point of view, the most promising variations would seem to be mutations. But mutations capable of advancing life in a progressive way have not been discovered. If evolution has occurred, its causes remain a mystery. We must point out that though the doctrine of creation taught in the Bible must be accepted in faith, those who believe in evolution must also rely on faith, for scientific proof of evolution is still lacking. Under such conditions is it any wonder that the statements of Bateson and Vernon Kellogg many years ago seem still true today? In their time they freely admitted that the causes of evolution remained unknown, and (if there be any) they still remain unknown today. As we have pointed out, the chromosome evidence as well as the evidence from genetics seems to be opposed to any idea of progressive evolution.

B. Conclusion from the Facts of Geology

We have reviewed the facts from geology bearing on the evidence for evolution and have discovered many interesting points.

1. The first life discovered as fossils in the Cambrian period is far too complex to have originated *de novo* at that period unless God created it then. This fact has compelled evolutionists to assert that from two-thirds to three-fourths of the whole evolutionary process took place during the several billions of years previous to that time but left no geological record. The only evidence offered in support of this claim is that graphite has been discovered in pre-Cambrian rocks, but since graphite and carbides can arise in sealed systems from cyanide or cyanate in the presence of an electric arc, it is possible that graphite arose from natural causes without the presence of life. Graphite can also arise from other chemical processes apart from life.

2. The great gap between vertebrates and invertebrates shows no possible way the vertebrates could have evolved from invertebrates.

3. While radioactivity in the rocks dates the age of the earth at 4.5 billion years, it is impossible to date the fossils by that method, for even

according to evolutionists the fossils were not deposited until about 4 billion years later.

4. Fossils cannot be dated by the Carbon¹⁴ method, for this method cannot give dates back of 20,000 years.

5. Superposition of rocks determines the relative evolutionary sequence. Fossils themselves determine the dates of strata found in widely separated places. But even in one place two strata containing differing fossils would not *prove* that the forms of life were not on the earth at the same time. The argument for evolution from the fossils appears to involve the fallacy of arguing in a circle: the fossils determine the relative periods of the rocks; the relative periods determine the age of the fossils because evolution is thought to have occurred.

6. "Thrust faults" can be better explained as the deposit of the rocks in the order in which they are found *in situ* rather than by the theory that the "older" stratum was pushed over the "younger" stratum, or that the "younger" stratum was pushed under the "older" stratum—for as much as sixty miles.

C. General Conclusion Regarding Evolution

There would seem to be no evidence for evolution from the facts of genetics, and the evidence from the fossils said to prove evolution is at the very least highly questionable.

III. SPECIAL CREATION

The most reasonable interpretation of the Biblical account of the origin of life and man is that God created both on successive days. The Hebrew word *yom* which we translate as "day" is used in Scripture as meaning "period." That was possibly its usage in the first chapter of Genesis. In other words, the days were possibly creative periods of time that had beginnings and endings. Those periods might have been separated by long stretches of time, though the various forms of life, which are so dependent upon each other, can better be explained as having been created at approximately the same time.

Why is it that many scientists reject special creation with the scorn that some evolutionists do? If there is a rational God at all, He could make the world of life at one stroke as easily as through a long process. But if the evolutionary theory be rejected, however much special creation may be disliked, it is the only alternative. The evidence of the

Book of Genesis is not as antiquated as many evolutionary scientists would have us believe. It tells us that in the beginning God created the heavens (i.e., the stars) and the earth. It does not tell us when that beginning was. To understand the passage we must take the viewpoint of an observer on the earth had there been one. We are not told when creation began. Earthly time could not be reckoned until night and day were divided. After the dust cloud condensed to form the protoplanet which we call earth, we are told that the crust became molten. At that time water must have been driven away from the earth by kinetic repulsion to form clouds so dense that no light from the star we call the sun could have pierced it. Only when the water had fallen to the earth and formed the seas could light have penetrated to the surface of the earth. Only then could darkness have been separated from light to form day one. That darkness may have lasted millions or billions of years before the first creative day occurred, after the crust of the earth cooled so that water could stay on the surface. Later (on the fourth day), the light of the sun, moon, and stars reached the surface of the earth.

Of course that time was many, many years before man appeared on the earth. The earth had to be prepared for his appearance. However, the facts do not demand the millions of years the evolutionary geologists assume for the age of all life. God could have created such things in any length of time He desired, even instantaneously, if that was His will.

CHAPTER V

THE REASONABLENESS OF SUPERNATURALISM

I. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental conflict in which Christianity is engaged today, in the intellectual sphere, is between *naturalism* and *supernaturalism*. Beneath all the attacks of those scientists, philosophers, scholars, and theologians who oppose the Christianity that relies on the teachings of the *whole* Bible lies an undercurrent of *naturalism*. Usually it is more or less concealed, according as the opponent of supernaturalism is or is not within the ranks of professing Christians. By the term "naturalism," as it will here be used, is meant the doctrine which denies either the possibility of supernaturalism in the universe, because the universe is governed and controlled by natural laws, or, in case the theoretical possibility is admitted, the *fact* of such an intervention's having occurred.¹

In this chapter we will concern ourselves only with the point of view which denies the possibility of supernatural intervention in the universe. By "supernaturalism" we refer to the doctrine which says that intervention by the Triune God from *outside* the forces called natural laws in the universe is possible and probable, and that there is convincing evidence that such intervention has occurred in the past and may occur at any time when God so desires to intervene. The evidence for such intervention in the past will be discussed in the following chapters. In this chapter we shall endeavor to show that the doctrine of supernaturalism is reasonable.

¹ Julian Huxley makes a valid distinction between "science" and "scientism," that is, the claim that science is the answer to everything.

II. THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPERNATURALISTIC INTERVENTION IN THE UNIVERSE

If the arguments advanced in the preceding chapters are sound, we have shown that a power which we call "God" exists, and that His nature is such that He has both the power and the knowledge to intervene in the universe. Certainly, unless the created is above the Creator, unless the designed thing is greater than the Designer, unless the law is above the Lawgiver or Lawmaker, there is no escaping the conclusion that God can, if He wishes, intervene in the universe to accomplish His divine purposes. We have shown how logically impossible it is for the opposing hypotheses such as materialism² and pantheism to account satisfactorily for the existence of the universe. We have shown how improbable it would be for the universe of today to have arrived at its present condition by a process of Godless evolution, and we have shown that even though evolution has occurred it would be necessary to postulate a God to have created the primordial cell or cells with all the potentiality of all forms of organic life. The only conclusion possible, then, is to say that there is such a God, having power, intelligence, personality, and will, capable of producing the world of today, with its manifold forms of life culminating in man. Certainly if such a God exists, and reason compels us to believe that He does, no rational man would deny the possibility of His intervening in the universe which He has made.

And yet, absurd as it seems, some educated men, both scientists and scholars, have denied and do today deny the possibility of God's intervening in the universe, especially to perform a miracle. What is the reason for this remarkable fact? Is there a flaw in our arguments, or is there an explanation ready at hand for this attitude on the part of these men? I believe that such educated men take this attitude toward supernaturalism for several reasons.

1. The common and widespread belief that the uniformity of nature forbids the possibility of supernaturalistic intervention in the universe is the first reason. This, perhaps more than any other one thing, prevents those who do not believe in the Bible from fairly investigating

² Cf. Frank Allen, "The Witness of Physical Science to the Bible," in *Modern Science and the Christian Faith*, p. 99: "The concept of the rigidity of physical so-called laws has vanished and in its place has come the belief that the so-called laws of nature are the statistical properties of the universe."

the claims and evidence in support of the supernatural revelation contained in the Bible.

What is the *uniformity of nature*? In the first place, it is not a *force*. It is not a *power* that is supreme over all nature, forcing everything and everybody to obey it. The uniformity of nature is a mere abstraction, having no concrete existence in the external world. It is merely the scientific statement of the fact that all nature seems to be working under a system of "natural" laws, which as far as scientific observation can tell seem to be invariable in their application. But even this scientific statement of uniformity must, today, be modified: "The principle of certainty of Laplace has been superseded by the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg. . . . The concept of the rigidity of physical law has vanished and in its place has come the belief that the so-called laws of nature are the statistical properties of the universe. The rise of the doctrine of relativity has shown, too, that the conception of the world as a combination of absolute qualities is erroneous."³

Just what are "natural" laws? From a scientific point of view, are they anything more than the way the phenomena of nature have been observed to happen within the time range of experience? The natural laws are not the forces themselves which they describe, but only the scientific formulation of the way those forces have been observed to act. Natural laws are not to be confounded then, with the "forces of nature" which they presume to describe. They have no control whatever over the forces themselves. What we must do is to investigate the forces of nature. Are they eternal? Are they not rather the power of the eternal God *in action*? The Christian holds that God is under no compulsion to keep the forces of nature uniform in their action. To him the forces of nature are uniform in their action *because God is a rational God*, an *omniscient* God, an *eternal* and *all-powerful* God, *who does not have to change His mind*, every few days or centuries, *in order to make room for unexpected happenings not included in His eternal plan*! This fact, and this fact alone, is why the forces of nature act in a uniform way. If God, from all eternity, for any reason sufficient unto Himself, allows these forces to depart from their uniformity of action, there is nothing in the forces themselves to prevent the change, and the "laws of nature," which of course are mere abstractions, naturally have no power to prevent the change.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

Now suppose it is part of God's eternal plan that for some great purpose of His own He will intervene in these forces and cause a break in their uniformity and invariability. What is to keep such an interruption from occurring? Nothing! Granting the fact that there is a personal God and that the forces of nature are not themselves eternal and independent of His control, nothing can forestall a break in the uniformity of nature if God desires it. The only question that may arise is whether God desires the changes to occur. The question then becomes: Is it probable that God would so intervene or not, and is there sufficient evidence to show that He has intervened? The uniformity of nature depends upon human observation and experience. If that experience were long enough to extend through all the ages of the past, we should be justified in saying that these laws have been uniform in the past, but even then, from a scientific point of view, we could not say they would be uniform in the future but only that there was the strongest kind of probability that they would be uniform in the future.

According to Christians, Bible evidence proves that such supernatural intervention has occurred. The question is one purely of evidence: does the evidence show that supernatural intervention has ever happened? The fact of the present apparent uniformity of nature is no barrier whatever to the intervention of God in the past. The most that could be said from a scientific point of view is that there is a strong probability against such intervention. But if God had a motive sufficiently powerful, He probably *would* interrupt the uniformity of nature. Christians claim that the redemption of men was a strong enough motive to warrant intervention, and thus that intervention is not only possible but probable. The whole matter, then, can be reduced to the limits of a case at law, with the common people sitting as judge and jury to decide whether the evidence is strong enough to prove that intervention has occurred.

2. The second reason why many educated men take a negative attitude toward the Bible is their ignorance of the actual contents of the Bible, and especially of the *evidence* in support of its *historicity*. This ignorance is in no way surprising when one remembers the general lack of early study of the Bible on the part of university and public school trained men. In the public schools of America the separation of church and state has gone so far that science, history, mathematics, and all other subjects are taught apart from their true relationship to God and His control of the universe. The Bible is no longer taught even as

literature in most public schools, with the result that the average high school graduate thinks of Christianity and the Bible as a sort of fifth wheel in life: if a person is inclined that way, he can be interested in them, but for the practical man in a world of scientific law they have very little significance. He has little interest in them and thinks that they are really outmoded in this modern age.

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that most scientists and professional men have never made a study of the evidence in support of the historicity of the Bible. Such study demands special training—in the languages of the Bible, in archaeology, and in the history of the lands surrounding Palestine. It is really a science itself. One would hardly expect an inventor or a physicist to be an authority on the evidence for the historicity of the Bible. But it is surprising to find men who are authorities in some other lines setting themselves up as authorities in Biblical criticism without having given more than the most cursory study to the subject, beyond swallowing whole what some destructive critic, whose own opinions are based on naturalistic premises, says about the Bible. The same scientists would not dream of criticizing the views of a fellow scientist in some realm where they had never studied themselves. Yet sometimes such men will, in all seriousness, set out to pick the Bible to pieces and tell the world that it needs a new religion more in harmony "with modern thought"! I submit that according to the laws of reason a person has no right to deny the historicity of a document or group of documents without having studied the evidence on *both sides* of the question. The saddest part of it all is that these men, because of the respect and reputation they have rightly gained in their own lines of study, receive a welcome hearing in newspapers and magazines. People seem to think that they speak with equal authority about the Bible and about their own special field, and many are led astray. To put forth an authoritative statement when expressing an opinion about the Bible and its historicity, without even reading what the defenders of the Bible's historicity have to say, is unfair.

Of course the point may be raised with equal plausibility as to the right of Biblical scholars to express opinions on scientific points without serious study of the subjects in question. Admittedly, a Biblical scholar should not discuss scientific subjects without thorough study.⁴ But as

⁴ When a person expresses an opinion on some subject of science without a thorough study of the facts bearing on that subject, he may find that he is, as Thomas Huxley said, in possession of "a beautiful theory murdered by a gang of brutal facts."

the noted medical authority and surgeon Dr. Howard A. Kelly wrote to a friend of mine, "We have a right to criticize because we have studied the subject." When we base our criticism upon the published facts and discoveries of eminent scientists, our inferences and conclusions deserve serious consideration.

3. The third reason for the negative attitude toward the Bible is one seldom thought of or mentioned, but none the less important and true. The sin and corruption of men's hearts often leads men to reject the book which reveals and condemns such sin and corruption. We would not for a moment charge that all non-Christian scientists who reject the Bible are living lives of scandalous sin. Most of them are respectable, sincere, hard-working, underpaid, and dedicated to their particular science. But they are living in independence of God and perhaps in rebellion against His control of their lives. They therefore do not enjoy reading the book which demands humble obedience to the commands of God, and particularly demands trust in the Saviour who died on Calvary. So instead of heeding the words of the Bible, they seek unconsciously to justify their rejection of its humbling demands by trying to discredit the book which condemns their pride and rebellion against God. It is necessary for their peace of mind that they not be called to the bar of their own consciences, so naturally they pick flaws in the Bible and seek to discredit it. They must justify themselves in their own eyes for not accepting the gospel message, so they must try to show that it is not a true message from God.

These are some of the reasons why some educated men do not accept the Bible as the Word of God. Let no one suppose that, because certain clergymen and professors in theological seminaries refuse to take the Bible as the Word of God written, and sometimes sneer at the arguments for the historicity and authenticity of the Bible, these arguments are therefore beneath consideration. Nor let him think that they have been tried and found wanting before the bar of scientific examination by judges who have fair-mindedly weighed all the evidence for the defense and adjudged it insufficient to prove the case for the historicity of the Bible. The judges in every case have been prejudiced! The favorite phrase of the negative critics, "all scholars are agreed," means all scholars *who start with naturalistic premises* are agreed that anything which has the slightest odor of supernaturalism connected with it is condemned by that fact alone! No matter how strong the evidence may

be that the supernatural *has* occurred, since these scholars take the position that it cannot occur, all evidence for its occurrence is ruled out of court without examination.

Now I submit that even from a scientific point of view such procedure is unwarranted. Questions of fact are not to be decided by any *a priori* principle laid down by any scholars, however erudite they may be. If facts and principles are at odds, so much the worse for the principles! The only thing we must be sure of is our facts. Facts are decided by *evidence*, and by *evidence alone*. Anyone, therefore, who attempts to attack the historicity of the Bible must present *evidence*, not theories; otherwise his arguments are not worthy of serious consideration. We have already shown that naturalism itself is a false principle, unless we abandon all belief in God. Once admit God into the case, and you cannot keep the possibility of the supernatural out. Whether it has occurred is a matter of evidence.

Again, it is not surprising that unredeemed men question the possibility of supernatural intervention in the universe. The Word of God in fact prophesied that this would be the case. "In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation'" (II Pet. 3:3-4).

But there is another point to be considered in this connection. Even if we could not prove by argument that God exists (which supposition we will not for a moment admit), nevertheless, if there is sufficient, and sufficiently strong, evidence of a supernatural intervention in the universe in the past, that fact alone would be the strongest kind of proof of the existence of God.

III. THE PROBABILITY OF SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION IN THE UNIVERSE

Having shown that supernatural intervention in the universe is a possibility, let us now consider why it seems probable.

In the first place, God would not logically create man and leave him alone. A personal God, if He is at all like men in his fundamental characteristics, as the Bible says He is, having created a personal being, would most naturally want to have communion and fellowship with

him. A person with free will might possibly do things contrary to the will of God, so it would be natural for God to warn him and help to guard him against such disobedience.

It seems strongly unlikely that God would leave man alone, especially if there were no barrier, such as sin, between the spirit of man and the Divine Mind. Then, too, if God has put man into the world, He must have some purpose for him to work out while he is in the world. As we said above, the fact that man is a free agent would most assuredly point to the possibility of man's not living his life in accordance with the plan of the Almighty. God would probably, therefore, at least reveal what His purpose was in placing man in the world, even if He did not hedge man's life about with barriers to prevent him from wrecking God's plans.

It also seems unlikely that man would be left in ignorance of the ultimate destiny of the human soul. If it is true that there is a heaven and a hell, to one of which places every soul will go, God would hardly leave man in ignorance of this momentous fact. Especially is this true if the corollary is true—that man's ultimate destiny is decided by his actions upon earth during a short lifetime, and that he will have no later chance after death to redeem the mistakes he made during life on earth. Most of all, after the fall of man, if God intended to redeem man's life from destruction in a definite way, and intended, as the Bible teaches, to have this redemption applied to a man's life through faith in a risen Lord, He would most certainly tell men about this fact in some way or other. We thus see that there is a very great probability, if the God represented in the Bible exists, that He would reveal certain vital facts to man.

IV. WAYS BY WHICH REVELATION COULD BE MADE

Having shown that a revelation from God to man is both possible and probable, we will now take up the ways in which God could reveal Himself to man, in order to know what to expect in the way of evidence if God has revealed Himself.

1. The first way in which God might reveal Himself to man is by *theophany*—that is, by appearing directly to man, in some form like that of a man or angel, and holding direct converse with him. God might accomplish such a theophany by sending a voice, as He did to Moses from the burning bush, in the desert of Sinai. At first thought

this way might seem the most natural and ordinary one, and doubtless it would be so were it not for the fall of man, which plunged the whole race into sin. The sin in man's heart has erected a barrier between God and man. It is true that God has at times broken through this barrier and revealed Himself directly to certain men such as Abraham and Moses, especially in early Old Testament times, but it was always an unusual thing, and when it occurred the people to whom God appeared felt it was unusual and considered themselves liable to death unless God protected them. When God appeared to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai and thundered forth the Ten Commandments, the people were afraid and did not want the appearance to continue. So, because of sin, we must not expect the majority of God's revelations to man to be made in that way.

2. The second way is by dreams and visions. These differ in that in a dream God reveals Himself while the person dreaming is unconscious. In a vision the person receiving the revelation is in a conscious state, or in a trance, during which he consciously perceives the vision occurring outside his own mind. In other words, in a dream the revelation is in the mind itself, while in a vision the revelation is external to the recipient and is perceived by the use of his ordinary faculties of sight and hearing. These methods were among the commonest by which God revealed Himself in Bible times, especially in Old Testament times.

3. The third method of revelation is by the supernatural quickening of the minds of chosen men, so that they can, by the use of their spiritually sensitized faculties, perceive clearly and correctly the spiritual truths which God wants disclosed to His people and, by giving them proofs that their revelation was from God, send them forth as His messengers to preach the divine message.

4. A fourth method is the one by which the Bible was given to us. The minds of prophets, apostles, and apostolic men were controlled by the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit, so that when they wrote the words of the Bible, what they wrote was kept free from error, and what they recorded was the truth God wanted them to record. It is not to be thought that God ordinarily dictated the words or interfered in any way with the ordinary exercise of the faculties of the writers; He so guided them that they wrote what they wished, yet their words were kept free from error.

5. The fifth and most important way of all was the complete revelation of God which came to us through His only begotten Son, Jesus

Christ, who was both God and man, and who in himself embodied the complete revelation of the nature and character of God to man.

V. WAYS OF ATTESTING AND ACCREDITING A REVELATION

Let us now consider in what ways a revelation when given by God to man could be accredited and attested. It is perfectly plain that such a revelation would need to be attested and accredited, for unless it were, men would never believe that the revelation was from God Himself. In a matter of such vital importance, men would have a right to demand of anyone claiming to have a revelation from God that he show his credentials. An ambassador to a country must present properly attested credentials before he has a right to claim recognition as an authorized representative of his own country. In the same way any man claiming to come from God with a message from God to man must first prove beyond question that he is the authorized representative of God.⁵ And his credentials must be of a kind that could not be duplicated by man; otherwise they would lose all value as accrediting a message from God.

Is it not clear, then, that if there has been a revelation from God, there must be something accompanying that revelation proving incontestably that it was *from God* and not *from man*? An interruption in the uniformity of nature in the past seems highly probable, especially if God has given such a revelation to man. In our view there are only two ways in which the revelation could be attested.

1. The first of these ways is by what we commonly call miracles. A miracle, as we will use the term, is a departure from the ordinary method of God's activity. "A miracle is an event in the external world, which is accomplished by the immediate power of God." A miracle implies the direct manifestation of God's supernatural power. It will be seen at once that many of the things which men are in the habit of calling miracles are not properly so called. Some people call a miracle any marvelous event which ordinary men cannot explain by the laws of nature familiar to them, but which could be explained in accordance with those laws if they knew more about them. Now it is perfectly true that many of the actors in the Bible drama undoubtedly used human skill to accomplish some of the results which they brought

⁵ For example, note the fact that Moses could perform miracles before Pharaoh and the children of Israel to prove that he spoke from and for God. Further examples: the angel who spoke to Zechariah at the time of the conception of John the Baptist, and the prophet who prophesied to Jeroboam the first.

about, and it would be entirely wrong to suppose that they would use supernatural means to do what ordinary human means could do just as well. But such an event would not be a true *miracle*, though onlookers might not understand how it came about. The east wind which blew back the water of the Red Sea so that the children of Israel could cross was a "natural" force. Moses stretched out his rod toward the sea at the command of God, and the Lord sent the wind. Those were the supernatural elements in the situation, but the actual force used was the wind. A true miracle cannot be explained by natural laws, known or unknown. That is why they become such strong attestations of the fact that the revelation was from God.

Skeptics have argued that no amount of evidence could establish the fact that a miracle in the true sense has happened. They assert that an event such as the resurrection of Christ, even if proved to have occurred, would not therefore be proved to be a miracle. All that would be established, say such critics, is the fact that our knowledge of what is possible is imperfect and needs to be enlarged to include the event. Man would have to be omniscient, they insist, to know that the event was a true miracle, for there would always be the possibility that its explanation lay just beyond our present range of knowledge.

An argument such as this, plausible though it seems, breaks down in the light of actual experience. Let us imagine ourselves back in Palestine in the time of Christ, sitting in the synagogue when Christ healed the man with the withered hand. Let us imagine that we have known the man from childhood, and know perfectly well that his hand is shrunk and useless. It is much smaller than the other hand, has almost no flesh, and cannot be moved by its owner. Before our very eyes, when Christ speaks the command "Stretch forth thy hand!" the man suddenly stretches forth his hand, and instantly the flesh and muscles appear, the bones grow larger, and the hand becomes perfectly normal and useful! Could anyone convince us that this event was brought about by some unknown natural law "just beyond the present range of knowledge"?

The real reason for the skeptic's argument is that he does not believe the evidence for the happening of such events as miracles. If the evidence, however, supports the occurrence of the miracle, then the only reason for doubting it is rejection of the belief in the omnipotence of God.

2. The second way in which revelation could be attested is by the

prophetic foretelling of events. Now by prophecy, in the sense of foretelling an incident which is to come to pass in the future, we do not mean general statements which a man could make by closely observing present tendencies and shrewdly guessing what is likely to happen in the future. Though such things are loosely spoken of as prophecies, they are not properly so named. Actually, a predictive prophecy would foretell future events in such detail that the hypothesis of a shrewd guess could not account for its fulfillment; only the hypothesis of supernatural knowledge of the future could adequately account for the fulfillment of the prophecy. Only under these circumstances could a prophecy become a means of accrediting revelation. The value of prophecies for accrediting revelation is cumulative. The fulfillment of one prophecy might conceivably be due to chance. The fulfillment of two prophecies would be unlikely, though it might happen by chance. The fulfillment of three or more detailed prophecies would be very improbable, and the fulfillment of a dozen or a score would be beyond the bounds of possibility on any other hypothesis than that of supernatural knowledge of the future on the part of the prophet.

It will be noticed that the value of miracles as attesting revelation would be particularly effective only for the people beholding the miracle. Its value to others would be decreased in proportion as it became impossible to test the evidence directly. (Probably the only exception to this rule is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for, as will be shown later, the Christian Church was founded on the belief in this miracle, and if the miracle be denied, the origin of the belief must be satisfactorily accounted for in some other way. The value of this miracle, at least as attesting revelation, has, therefore, been in no way lessened by the passing of time because of the connection between the resurrection and the Christian Church.) The value of prophecy, on the other hand, increases with time. A true prophecy would be useless as a means of attesting revelation to the persons to whom it was uttered, because its fulfillment would lie in the future. The prophecy becomes valuable as a means of attesting revelation only after it has been fulfilled, and then, if the time when the prophecy was made can be dated with reasonable exactness, and especially if the prophecy was fulfilled only after the lapse of centuries, it becomes a proof positive for all time that the one uttering the prophecy had supernatural knowledge. For instance, we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Old Testament Scriptures were in existence long before the time of Christ. No contrary hypothesis

would be listened to for a moment by scholars even of the critical school. If it can be shown with equal positiveness that certain prophecies contained in the Old Testament books have been fulfilled since the beginning of the Christian era, then we shall have the most convincing proof that the writers had supernatural knowledge, and that the revelation which they put forth as coming from God actually did come from Him.

VI. THE QUESTION OF THE ACTUALITY OF SUCH REVELATION, ONE OF FACT, TO BE DECIDED BY EVIDENCE ONLY

A little reflection on the subject will be sufficient to convince one that the only way to decide whether or not such a revelation has been given to us by God is by an examination of the evidence. Since the matter is one purely of fact, and of fact alone, it can be decided only by the evidence. We may have a theory that it is impossible for the earth to revolve on its axis, but no matter how plausible the theory, our belief in it will not prevent the earth from turning on its axis once every twenty-four hours! In the same way, if God *has* given a revelation, no amount of theorizing to the contrary can change the fact. The only way those who do not believe God has given a revelation to man can prove their case is for them to show that the evidence for such a revelation is worthless.

The whole question of whether there has or has not been such a revelation is, then, a matter of evidence. What are the laws of evidence? They are few in number and very easy to apply.

1. *Is the witness competent?* This is the first question that must be asked of every witness, before any testimony can be admitted in court. If it can be shown that the witness is not sufficiently educated to give testimony about the things concerning which he pretends to testify, his testimony is ruled out of court. For instance, if a man who is not a handwriting expert were to testify to a certain bit of writing and express his opinion that it was a forgery, his testimony would carry little weight because it could be shown that he was not a competent witness.

2. *Is the witness reliable?* That is, is he truthful and honest? Is there any reason to suspect that he is prejudiced or is trying to conceal the truth? If it can be shown that the witness is not a reliable person, his testimony must be taken with a great deal of care, and if he is sufficiently unreliable, it must be ruled out of court. For example, it is well known

among students of history that Heroditus was an unreliable historian; any statements he makes must be taken with a grain of salt. On the other hand, Thucydides is recognized to have been an accurate and trustworthy historian. To cite another example, from the Bible, if the critics can show that Luke is inaccurate in his statements about geography, they can go a long way toward discrediting his witness on other questions where he cannot be tested by outside knowledge.

3. *Was the witness in a position to know the facts?* That is, was the witness so situated that he could put himself in possession of all the pertinent facts? For example, if it could be shown that Luke never saw Paul, his testimony concerning Paul's actions would be greatly discredited.

These are the three laws of evidence, and all testimony or evidence, of whatever kind, must be tested by them before being accepted. Now we want to call attention to a very important fact. Any man of average intelligence is amply qualified to sit on the jury to consider the case of the destructive critics against the Bible. It does not take any special technical training or knowledge to be able to weigh this evidence. All it takes is an open mind with the capacity to form judgments. We can all apply the tests mentioned above, and estimate the evidence by them. It will then be possible to form a judgment of our own in accordance with the evidence. *A priori* theories as to what could or could not have happened must all be abandoned and the decision made on the evidence only. Let us now take up the evidence for the Bible as the Word of God and decide for ourselves whether or not it contains a true revelation.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAUSE OF THE GROWTH OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD¹

I. INTRODUCTION

The trend of modern scholarship is unquestionably away from supernaturalism. Christianity is being more and more looked upon as one of a number of great religions of the world, having, it is admitted, a clearer perception of the great spiritual truths of monotheism—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—than the other ethnic religions, but being after all only one of several great religions each with its peaks of spiritual insight.

The West, we are told, has much to learn from these other religions of the East, and, in fact, Christianity in the past has gotten many of its greatest ideas from other religions, so that it is only logical for modern Christians to examine all the different religions, discarding many of the outworn categories of thought of Christianity, and pick out those features which can be of practical use to the modern world. It is ridiculous, say certain scholars, for Christians to think that the Jews of the times of the prophets, or the Jews of the first century of the Christian era, had a monopoly of religious insight. The sages of India and China and Arabia also were great religious thinkers and discovered many profound religious truths.²

Of course, the modern mind must discard such things as miracles and other superstitious excrescences, together with myths which characterize all ancient religious thought. All the old religions, we are told, have such elements as virgin births and legends of resuscitation, so we are

¹ Reprinted in part from *The Princeton Theological Review*, October, 1925. Used by permission.

² Arnold Toynbee, *Christianity Among the Religions of the World*, p. 95.

not surprised to find them in the early legends of Christianity. But these are unnecessary to the appreciation of the deeper religious truths discovered by the ancient religious philosophers; moderns can easily pierce these trappings to the kernel of truth within and, discarding the symbols, embrace the reality which alone is of practical value to us of the present day.

The various lines of evidence upon which the supernaturalistic view of Christianity rests will be taken up in the following chapters. The rest of this chapter will try to show that the development of all the other religions can be explained by purely natural causes.

The axiom which we stated in a previous chapter, that there must be a cause adequate to explain every observed effect, is peculiarly applicable to the spread of the great religions of the world. Can their growth be explained by purely natural causes? If so, what were they? What were the claims of the founders? Did any of these great religions claim to be supernaturally founded, and if so, how were the claims substantiated? Is there any evidence of supernatural power at work in their spread? These are the questions that demand an answer. If the spread of these religions can be explained on purely natural grounds it will be doubtful that they had supernatural origins, even though they may claim to have, unless the claims are supported by the strongest kind of evidence of supernaturalism.

From this angle, let us briefly review the chief religions in the world today, dealing only with the causes of their growth and development, especially in the earliest stages.

II. MOHAMMEDANISM OR ISLAM

The most recent religion to gain an international following is Islam, or, as it is popularly called, Mohammedanism. It is one of the three great missionary religions, Buddhism and Christianity being the other two. It is also the religion which has been in greatest conflict with Christianity in the past. There are probably over 433,000,000 followers of Islam.³ Its early spread was even more rapid and extensive than that of Christianity. Most important of all, its conquests took place in lands which were nominally, at least, under the control of the Christian Church. Certainly in this religion, if in any, we would expect to find evidence of supernatural influences at work in its growth.

³ *World Almanac*, 1963.

The first thing we notice about Islam, however, is the fact that almost from the very first it was *spread by force*. More important still is the correlative fact that there was no important military power available to check its career. The Western Roman Empire had been overrun by barbarians previously, after the church had become corrupt and stagnant with too much prosperity and political power. The Eastern Roman Empire was divided politically by insurrection, its army corrupted and weakened by luxury and lack of discipline. The Greek Orthodox Church was divided by factions and could not offer a united religious opposition to the common enemy. The military forces of the Eastern Roman Empire were busily engaged in fighting the Persians, who were invading Asia Minor. The Persians themselves had their hands full defending the territory they had just conquered from the Eastern Roman Empire and paid little attention to the Mohammedan growth in Arabia.

The Christians in South Arabia regarded the prophet Mohammed as a deliverer from their Persian enemies. They fought in his armies against the non-Christian tribes in other parts of Arabia, to establish one Arabian nation in which they expected to be free. Though the first successor of Mohammed did not oppress the Christians, Caliph Omar deported those who would not accept Islam, and made it the national Arabian religion. By that time the caliphs, with powerful armies of Bedouins at their backs, had begun to sweep everything before them. Plunder and rapine appealed to the Moslem armies, and they forced their victims to become Moslems or to accept slavery or death. To save their lives and property, multitudes of effete Christians apostatized, and Islam triumphed.

Not the least of the causes of the military success of Mohammed and his successors was the fanatical bravery of their troops. Every Moslem was taught to believe that if he died while fighting the "infidels" he would be immediately translated to Paradise, where he would enjoy all manner of sensual rewards. "The sword," said Mohammed, "is the key to heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of Allah, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer: whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven and at the day of judgment his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim." This is what accounts, more than any other fact, for the zeal of the followers of Mohammed. With such a belief, it is easy to see why they were almost irresistible in battle. Another factor, of course, has already been

mentioned: the forces of the prophet met little organized opposition. They swept over Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa and conquered Spain. Their victorious career was not checked for a hundred years, until Charles Martel defeated them at Tours in A.D. 732.

Though the main reason for the spread of Islam was the caliph's army, Islam appealed also to the lower nature of mankind and promised all sorts of sensual delights in heaven. It is not difficult to get converts among idolaters and people whose religion means little to them, with such an appeal. Islam demanded no moral regeneration; many forms of self-indulgence were permitted. As long as certain external forms of worship were gone through, the Moslem could follow many baser impulses, except drink intoxicating liquor, with impunity.

These facts in themselves adequately account for the spread of Islam. Undoubtedly God used this religion to punish a corrupt church, effete with prosperity, which had become unfaithful to Christ and true Christianity, just as He used the Goths, Franks, Vandals, and other invaders to chastise the church in Europe, preserving the true religion in the Irish Church, from which it spread again over central Europe. But though God used it as an instrument, natural causes are adequate to account for the actual spread of the religion.

III. BUDDHISM

In 552 B.C., Gautama, an Indian prince, was born. In after life he assumed the name "Buddha," the "enlightened," and became the founder of the Oriental religion known as Buddhism. Buddhism was an outgrowth of Hinduism, and its early development must be understood in the light of this fact. Gautama became dissatisfied with the gross sensuality of the Hinduism surrounding him, and at last withdrew from the world, first to asceticism, and then, when he became convinced that that offered no hope, to mystical contemplation, in search of a way of escape from the pain and sorrow of life. During this stage of his life he thought he had discovered the "way." The doctrine which he set forth was as follows:

1. *Suffering and sorrow.* All states of mind which co-exist with consciousness of individuality are states of sorrow and suffering. Birth, growth, decay, death, all cause sorrow and suffering.

2. *The cause of suffering.* The action of the outer world (i.e., the

objective world as opposed to subjective states of consciousness) upon us excites delight or desire, and these alike are the cause of sorrow and suffering.

3. *The cessation of sorrow.* The annihilation of all thirst and lust of life brings about the cessation of sorrow. Desire nothing and no one, and the world cannot touch you. You will then be delivered from sorrow.

4. *The way of deliverance.* This is the Noble Eightfold Path of (1) *right belief*, that is, the doctrines Buddha taught; (2) *right feelings*, that is, the stifling of all feelings of whatever kind: hate, love, envy, jealousy, kind feelings, and so on; (3) *right speech*, that is, never lying so that one will be found out; (4) *right actions*, that is, negative rules of restraint of one's passions of every description; (5) *right means of livelihood*, that is, getting food and clothing by accepting gifts from others through begging—thus making a merit of what should be one's shame; (6) *right endeavor*, that is, mental labor only, since all physical labor merely fosters suffering and sorrow in the end; (7) *right memory*, that is, blotting out of the mind all remembrance of either happiness or sorrow, delightful or disagreeable experiences, and ceasing to think about the past or worry about the future; (8) *right meditation*, that is, making the mind a perfect blank, with no thought of any description. As far as possible one is to enter a hypnotic state of trance with no thoughts whatever, to annihilate all thought of any kind.⁴

Bear in mind that the ideal future life for the Buddhist is non-conscious existence, if it can be called existence. Buddhism is not an other-worldly religion. It seeks the blotting out of all conscious existence here and hereafter. The Buddhist idea of salvation is totally different from the Christian idea.

What caused the spread of such a religion over so large a section of the continent of Asia? There were two periods of its growth, with different causes operating in each. During the first period, when Buddhism spread over India, it was not so much a new religion as a reform of the already existing religion of Hinduism. "He would have claimed that he was a correct exponent of the spirit of the ancient Vedic faith. His disciples simply claimed that he was the greatest, wisest, and best of the Hindus. . . . He was the Hindu Luther . . . whose personality fused into living unity forces that had long been gathering, and

⁴ Cf. Robert Speer, *The Light of the World*, p. 78.

originated a movement that swept over India and all but submerged for a time the monuments, institutions, and ordinances of the ancient religion."⁵

At first Buddhism worked inside the castes of Hinduism itself. At this point, in explanation of its early growth, we must note the fact that Buddhism in its first form was in some respects superior morally and ethically to the surrounding Hinduism. It showed a way of escape from the cares, pains, and anxieties of life and presented an ideal of life which particularly appealed to natives of a tropical climate: a spiritually sanctioned vagrancy for many, with no practical work, no cares or responsibilities. It glorified begging and made it possible for men to get their living without working. Such a doctrine had a peculiar attraction for the superstitious, ignorant, morally deficient population of India and spread rapidly. Soon, however, it began to meet opposition from the Hindu priests.

Buddhism then began to show its true character. It began to make compromises, which ended in its reabsorption into Hinduism. One of the greatest causes of its spread and vitality has been the readiness with which it has compromised in whatever country it has reached.

Until recently scholars have accepted the Asoka legend in regard to the spread of Buddhism. Asoka was a legendary king said to have ruled over most of India and to have gathered the wandering Buddhist priests into strict organizations which sent out missionaries into neighboring countries. Recent investigations seem to indicate that there is little if any truth in the whole Asoka legend.⁶ Doubt as to the existence even of any such king as Asoka is expressed, and certainly, if the testimony of Megasthenes is to be accepted, in his day (306 B.C.) there was no universal kingdom in the whole of India, for Megasthenes says that there were 118 independent kingdoms in India at that time.

The history of Buddhism is shrouded in mystery, but what facts we have seem to indicate that many of its elements of similarity to Christianity were copied from Nestorian Christianity in India. Whether the spread of Buddhism to other countries was due to the political power of Asoka, as was formerly thought, or to persecution in India, or, as seems likely, to the Buddhist traders who went into neighboring countries for wealth, perhaps accompanied by Buddhist priests with their begging bowls, the religion soon extended over much of Asia.

⁵ G. M. Grant, *The Religions of the World*, p. 108.

⁶ John Stewart, *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, pp. 234 ff.

As a missionary religion, the secret of its success lay in its readiness to incorporate into itself the superstitions and beliefs of the natives of whatever country it entered. In China it allied itself with animistic superstition and with Taoism, opposing the more aristocratic Confucianism of the literati. Even with this alliance, however, it made little headway until Emperor Ming Li in A.D. 61 established it as the imperial faith. Though opposed by the Confucianists, here again it maintained itself by compromise. The result was that the Buddhism of China today (before the communists sought to eradicate it along with other religions) became a curious mixture of animism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

From China Buddhism passed into Korea, where it incorporated the worship of the supreme Being into its system. Thus was introduced a fundamental contradiction into the heart of Buddhism, which was originally a religion without a God. From Korea it passed over into Japan, where after a losing struggle for a hundred years with Shintoism the Buddhist priests received a "revelation" that the sun goddess and other Japanese deities were all other incarnations of Buddha and should be included in the Buddhist pantheon. The noticeable feature of Buddhism today, then, is the fact that, wherever found, it is a totally different thing from the religion which Buddha propagated, and one which Buddha himself would never recognize.

In this brief sketch of Buddhism, we see several outstanding features that marked its spread. The periods of its intensest activity were the periods when it was backed by political power and prestige. When it did not have that backing it adapted itself to the religions of the countries where it spread. Its main appeal to converts was that it offered them a way of *earning* their peculiar salvation, by going through certain rites and ceremonies, something which naturally appeals to the religious instincts of man. Another cause of its spread was the fact that it satisfied man's natural inclination toward laziness by making laziness a virtue. All these causes amply account for the growth and spread of the religion.

IV. HINDUISM

The oldest living religion in the world is Hinduism. Probably more than to any other one thing it owes its vitality to its caste system, which holds the inhabitants of India in bands stronger than any steel ever

made. The castes are more rigidly observed than are the moral laws in a Western country. No member of a lower caste can associate with a member of a higher caste. It is this system which gives the unifying principle to a region said to possess 330,000,000 gods. As a matter of fact, practical Hinduism is not so much a religion as a social system that embraces all manner of religions. The only way the religion is spread is by inheritance, or by a Brahmin's going into a new locality and dividing the people into castes, at the same time declaring the local deity a Hindu god. The people in the caste have no choice in the matter, since all the castes which are higher than theirs unite to force them into their proper place. It makes no difference what the belief of the individual may be, whether he be atheist, monotheist, or polytheist; so long as he keeps the caste rules, he can do as he pleases and believe what he pleases. Of course Hinduism requires no ethical or moral laws to be kept and makes no pretense at any requirement of regeneration for a person to be a member of any caste. Immorality and sensuality are intimately connected with some of the temples as a part of the local religion. Under such conditions we cannot expect any standards of sexual morality for the people.

In addition to its caste system, Hinduism owes its existence to its capacity to absorb any competing religion. New religions simply become new castes, or the new ideas are incorporated into the already existing castes. As we have already pointed out, Hinduism is in reality a social system, and among the common people not really a religion, so that it can in no way be compared with Christianity.

V. TAOISM

The founder of Taoism, Lao-tse, was born about 604 B.C. in Honan province, China. The religion was so called after the book he wrote a short time before he died. In this book he set forth an ethical code of many good thoughts, but he advocated man's withdrawing from the world and contemplating Tao as a means of attaining peace and comfort. The religion which sprang up after his death soon incorporated the animism of the land in itself and became a religion of necromancy, geomancy, and demon worship. It spread through fear and peopled the earth and rivers and mountains with demons and dragons whom the people must propitiate with sacrifices and gifts if they would live in peace and prosperity. The priests were and are the only ones interested

in perpetuating the religion, and the only interest they have is that of gain. The principal reason the religion spread and gained a hold was that it played on the superstitions of the people and made them fear all the surrounding evil spirits. Unless these spirits were propitiated some dire evil would come upon them, and the only way they could be propitiated was by hiring a Taoist priest to offer sacrifice or diagnose the cause of some sickness or disturbance, so that the spirits would cease troubling the family or town. The priests continually played on the fears of the people and thus forced them to support their temples and the priests themselves. Of course Taoism is so mixed with the other religions of China that it is impossible to distinguish between its true followers and those who are really Buddhists or Confucianists, or who only offered sacrifice to the demons out of fear. It is easy to see from what has been said above that there is nothing remarkable about either the growth or the continuance of this religion. It was a religion founded on fear, spread through fear, and existing through fear. It has no appeal to morality or regeneration.

VI. CONFUCIANISM

In Confucianism we have the supreme example of the power of state education and family discipline, through which, almost solely, Confucianism conquered a mighty nation. There is truth in the old adage that if you repeat a thing often enough and do it sincerely you can make almost everyone believe you. The life of Confucius presents few remarkable characteristics. Born in 551 B.C., he began to show his intellectual powers at an early age, and he began to teach at the age of twenty-two. In the China of his time the old feudal system which had existed for fifteen hundred years before his birth was gradually disintegrating, and the people were losing their respect for morals and customs. Confucius perceived this breakdown of morality and started out to counteract it by gathering, studying, and teaching the wisdom of the past to all who would listen to him. To Confucius the golden age of wisdom and righteousness was in the past, and he believed that by spreading broadcast all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the ancients, he could reform society and make it perfect. It was this ideal that he set out to realize: to regenerate society by spreading the knowledge of right principles. He claimed no supernatural knowledge or power and taught no religion as such. He was an ethical philosopher and sage who be-

lieved that the world could be regenerated through knowledge. Needless to say, Confucius was doomed to disappointment, for it takes more than knowledge to regenerate society. It is useless to try to change the mind while the heart is filled with evil.

After an early success in the office of magistrate of Chungtu, Confucius was made Minister of Works and Crime in the state of Lu and started out to reform the whole region. At first he succeeded, and the state became a model for all the surrounding country. But the rulers of the neighboring states became jealous of the prosperity of Lu, and finally one of them sent a present of beautiful women and fine horses to the Prince of Lu, by means of these sensual pleasures breaking down the influence of the austere philosopher over the Prince. Angered by the neglect which his doctrines began to suffer, Confucius went into voluntary exile, seeking a ruler who would appreciate and follow the teachings which he felt were able to reform the people. For thirteen years he and his disciples wandered from state to state looking for this kind of a ruler, but all in vain. The men of China needed more than knowledge to change their hearts. At last, five years before his death, he was recalled to Lu and spent the rest of his life in quiet literary effort, collecting the Classics and putting them into permanent form. He died in 478 B.C. a disappointed and disillusioned old man.

After his death a wave of admiration and respect swept over China for the sage, and people began to study his writings and teachings more than before. That of course does not mean that they practiced the virtues he advocated, but they at least tried more than they had to follow his teachings. Not until the Han dynasty came into power, however, did the influence of Confucius become really powerful in molding Chinese character. During this dynasty—indeed, up to the end of the Chinese Empire and to some extent well into the period of the Chinese Republic—the education of Chinese youth consisted almost solely in the memorization of the Chinese Classics. Since the communists have taken control of the mainland of China, the old Confucian system of education has been almost completely abandoned. Needless to say, when the power of the state was back of this educational system, and all political preferment depended on the successful passing of examinations in the Chinese Classics, Confucianism retained a hold upon the people that almost no power could shake off.

The other explanation of the hold that Confucianism had on the Chinese people lies in the custom of ancestor worship, which existed

before the time of Confucius but which he approved and sanctified. "It has produced a family solidarity found nowhere else in the world. It has led to the legalization of concubinage as essential at times to the securing of sons to maintain the family line and the unending worship which is indispensable to the dead and the living."⁷ Thus the Chinese child, from the time he began to talk, was steeped in the influences of ancestor worship and the Chinese Classics. Is it any wonder that under such conditions Confucianism became fixed for so long a time upon the Chinese people?

Neither Confucius nor his followers claimed that their ethical system was a religion or that it had any supernatural origin. In actual fact, however, Confucianism was a religion, for around the system of ethics sprang up the worship of heaven, the powers of nature, Confucius himself, and the imperial ancestors, in addition to the worship of the ancestors of each individual family. Of course, state worship ceased with the establishment of communism, and, though we do not know too much about conditions in Communist China today, individual ancestor worship has probably been largely discarded.

Since it is admittedly of human origin and growth, Confucianism holds few problems for us in the search for supernaturalism in religion. It is well to point out several other facts which show why it appealed to the people. It was a ceremonial religion and fostered polygamy and the system of concubinage. If a person worshiped his ancestors faithfully he could live pretty much as he pleased, and still be in good standing in the community. While the Confucian Classics taught many virtues, the maxims had little hold on the hearts and lives of the followers of Confucianism, and no real regeneration was either demanded or expected. These facts, coupled with the educational system and ancestor worship, amply account for the origin and spread of the religion.

VII. SHINTOISM

Shintoism is in no sense a world religion. It was deliberately fostered and nurtured by the state, before World War II, to lead the people to reverence and worship the Japanese emperor as a god. The mythology of Shintoism produced a loyalty to country and emperor which westerners can hardly understand or appreciate. Though with the American occupation of Japan after World War II the emperor, under the

⁷ Speer, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

prodding of General MacArthur, published the fact that he was not divine, Shintoism is gradually coming back into power, and it seems only a question of time before it will again become dominant. The new constitution of the country separates the state from all religion, but in order to combat communism the non-Christian authorities are again encouraging bowing to the emperor and toward the Grand Shrine at Ise.

The mythology of Shintoism produced a loyalty to country and the emperor that probably will again appeal to non-Christian officials. According to Shinto myths, the first Japanese emperor was descended from the goddess of the sun, and the islands and the Japanese people sprang from gods. The islands are filled with thousands of Shinto shrines, their chief characteristic being the absence of ordinary idols. The sacred sword and the sacred mirror were almost treated as idols, but the name of the sun goddess inscribed on a strip of paper or wooden tablet was the real idol and received the worship, for it was supposed to be indwelt by the spirit of the sun goddess.

While the religion claims to be supernatural, the grotesque myths, unsupported by historical evidence, render its claims negligible. It is in no sense a missionary religion, and its spread was due to the protection and influence of the government. It tickled the pride of the Japanese people to be told that they were the offspring of gods and, as such, far superior to people in the rest of the world. The claims of the religion are absolutely unsupported by evidence or supernatural proofs.

VIII. COMMUNISM

Since the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 in St. Petersburg, communism has gradually spread over about a third of the globe. Claiming to be the "dictatorship of the proletariat," in order to establish an economic order in which there is no such thing as private property, but in which the state, in the name of the people, owns all wealth, all factories, and all means of production and distribution, communism has resulted in tyrannical dictatorship by the heads of the state. The interpretation of history according to Marxian socialism, as developed by Lenin and his successors, is that society is engaged in a relentless class war between the laboring class and the capitalist class. This war will result in the victory of the proletariat. All social, economic, and cultural activities will be

controlled by a single proletarian party, and naturally that party will be controlled by its leader or leaders.

The philosophy of communism is materialistic. Theoretically religion is to be eliminated as being the opiate of the people, invented in order to keep the lower classes subservient to the ruling capitalist class.

Man, however, is a religious being. By its very opposition to Christianity and other religions, communism puts atheism in their place as a real religion. By demanding blind obedience to the commands of the ruling dictators, communism actually becomes a religion of irreligion. Man and the state are really the objects of worship.

In the great square in front of the Kremlin in Moscow, the embalmed body of Lenin can be seen in its glass coffin. Until 1961 the body of Stalin was in the same tomb, but it has since been removed to an inconspicuous place. Almost every day long lines of Russians file past the coffin of Lenin in an attitude of deep reverence. Their reverence has a religious fervor. On religious holidays the Soviet government has established ceremonies to take the place of the former religious ceremonies. The bitter opposition of the state to religion has resulted in the religion of irreligion.

It is impossible to be truly neutral regarding God. By rejecting a religion which worships the Triune God, as well as the other religions in the Soviet Union, irreligion has become a religion. If we reject God, non-God inevitably becomes a religion in place of the worship of the true God.

IX. CONCLUSION

Though there are a number of minor religions in the world, and even in the United States, such as Mormonism, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc., such religions are really the offspring of Christianity. Not at all Christian in many of their teachings, they are considered usually on the fringe of Christianity. It is unnecessary to deal with them here, since they are all of recent birth and obviously not supernatural in origin.

In the great religions of the world, as we have shown, there has been nothing of supernatural power at work in their beginnings. The following chapter will discuss the origin and growth of Christianity in comparison with the origin and growth of these other great religions. It

should become increasingly evident that Christianity has had a supernatural origin and that its growth under peculiarly adverse circumstances must have been due to supernatural power and guidance working through the hearts and lives of Christian men and women.

CHAPTER VII

THE CAUSE OF THE EARLY GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY¹

I. INTRODUCTION

In our discussion of Islam we saw that the causes of its rapid spread were principally four: (1) It was spread by force. (2) It appealed to the lower sensual nature of man. (3) It was a religion that tolerated many forms of immorality. (4) It was a religion in which ritualism earned one's salvation.

In our discussion of the other great missionary religion, Buddhism, we saw that its spread had three principal causes: (1) It always compromised with and adapted itself to the native religion wherever it went. (2) Its peculiar idea of salvation, so different from the Christian teaching, was that man could reach *Nirvana*, the goal of self-extinction, by rites and ceremonies. (3) It made virtues of the natural proclivities of man's nature toward evil, in regard to laziness and selfishness.

Let us now take up the causes which were operating in the spread of these other missionary religions and see whether they were operating in the case of Christianity. It will be remembered that Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shintoism are in no sense world religions and have never been missionary religions, so we shall not deal with them in this connection.

II. CHRISTIANITY NOT SPREAD BY FORCE OR POLITICAL POWER

We will confine ourselves to the period prior to A.D. 325, by which time Christianity had spread throughout the Roman Empire. During this early period, up to the time when it became the official religion of

¹ Reprinted in part from *The Princeton Theological Review*, October, 1925. Used by permission.

the Roman Empire under Constantine, Christianity was never *spread by force*. Starting with a few humble followers of Christ, from the very first it was extended by persuasion, through the personal, man-to-man contact between Christians and those who were not Christians. Wherever it went it was presented by Christians who carried the gospel message by word of mouth, and whose message was witnessed to by their lives and example. Every Christian was a missionary every minute of his life. The sacred fire, lighted in the hearts of the humblest slaves, spread like a forest fire to the hearts of the highest members of Roman society, yet so quietly and unobtrusively that all the concentrated power of the Roman Empire was unable to check its progress. But in its whole early history *force* was never used in its behalf. Its victories were always accomplished by the persuasive power of men's lips and lives, finding a corresponding response in the hearts quickened by the Holy Spirit of God. Neither threat nor bribery, fear nor hope of material reward was ever used, during the first three centuries of its growth, to induce men to believe in the crucified Saviour.

Nor were Christian missionaries backed by political power or prestige during this period. On the contrary, all the political power and prestige of the mighty Roman Empire were brought to bear *against* the Christians and their propaganda. Whenever men became Christians, all hope of their ever securing political power or position vanished. Christians were treated as outcasts and robbed of whatever power or position they already had. Often, when the government officials discovered that a certain person had become a Christian, all his property was confiscated by the state, and the family, which may have been wealthy and powerful, became wanderers and beggars. Yet in spite of all this, the number of Christians multiplied until at the time of the accession of Constantine to the throne of the Roman Empire probably between a tenth and a fifth of all the people in the Empire were Christians.

III. SALVATION NOT GAINED BY RITUALISM

Christianity in the early Christian Church was not a religion in which a man's salvation could be earned by the performance of rites and ceremonies. Christianity had its rites and ceremonies, but historical research is making it abundantly clear that the early Christians did not regard them as conferring any special merit on the one who engaged in them. Baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper were the chief rites

of the new religion, but the new believers were never allowed to take part in them until they had passed a certain time as catechumens, and had proved by their lives that their repentance from sin was sincere and genuine and that their knowledge of Christian truths was sufficient to warrant their reception into the regular body of believers. Thus all who were received into the church learned before they became members of the church organization that salvation was a relationship between the inner heart of man and his God, and if that relationship was absent, no amount of rites and ceremonies would establish it. This meant that the natural tendency of man to trust in external acts of his own strength to secure favor with God had no grounding in the Christian religion as it was first propagated.

IV. CHRISTIANITY NEVER COMPROMISED DURING ITS EARLY SPREAD

During its early spread Christianity never compromised with or adapted itself to the native religions of the regions where it went. To understand what this really meant we must try to put ourselves back in the time when Christianity was trying to win its way against seemingly insuperable obstacles. No other religion which the world had known before, with the exception of Judaism, had ever claimed to be the only true religion or had tried to supersede other religions in the nations to which they went. Even Judaism, though it sought proselytes, never tried to extend itself among other nations, for most Jews thought that no other people could ever share in their unique relationship to Jehovah. No other religion even attempted to set itself up as the only true religion. Every other religion recognized the gods of other nations as gods of those localities and peoples and did not try to overthrow them. Nor did devotees of other religions refuse to worship strange gods if the occasion demanded it.

When the Roman government gained control of the lands bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, it never interfered with the worship of the local deities in the various lands, but it insisted that in addition the people should recognize the Roman emperor as a god. As far as we know there was almost no objection on the part of the people of the conquered lands to this requirement. Indeed it seemed to them quite the proper thing to do. Had not the Roman legions conquered them? The Roman authorities did not interfere with their worship of their own deities as long as they added the Roman emperor to the list.

But in the case of Christianity it was different. Not only did Christianity claim to be true, but it claimed to be the *only* true religion! Further, its devotees refused to recognize any other worship than that of the Triune God! This of course meant they would not sacrifice to the statues of the Roman emperor. This recalcitrance caused the Roman authorities to suspect them of being in opposition to the Roman government, and of course that was the unpardonable sin to the Romans. The Christian churches were thought of as being hotbeds of sedition, and they began to be treated as such. Most of the early persecution of the Christians arose from the fact that they were suspected of being opposed to Roman rule.

In many modern Christian circles, this exclusiveness of the early Christian attitude about religion seems entirely wrong. A cooperative approach to the ethnic religions is advocated. It is thought, with Arnold Toynbee, that "the traditionally Christian belief that Christianity is unique" should be "purged from Christianity."² Modern Christians who believe this would probably have been unwilling to suffer persecution because of refusal to sacrifice to the statue of the emperor.

But early Christianity took an entirely different view of the matter. The first Christians declined to sacrifice to or to worship at the statues of the Roman emperor. It would have been a perfectly easy matter for them to have secured immunity from persecution if they had been willing to give up their claim that Christianity was the *only* true religion, or if they had been willing to take a merely formal part in the worship of the statue of the emperor. They might not have needed to give up any of their own worship, and the only thing they would have had to do was to add emperor worship to their other rites and ceremonies. Doubtless to some this seemed reasonable, for had not the Apostle Paul himself said that they be subject to the powers which were over them (Rom. 13:1)? And had not Jesus himself in the temple at Jerusalem taught that they should render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's? But the early Christians realized that such arguments were only sophistry, that the first two of the Ten Commandments were directed at these very customs, and that if they compromised here they compromised in everything that made Christianity *the one true and only* valid religion. They therefore refused to temporize with the other religions with which they came in contact, and demanded that those

² Arnold Toynbee, *Christianity Among the Religions of the World*, p. 95.

who accepted Christianity should give up all other worship but that of the Triune God. Humanly speaking, this fact did more to arouse opposition than any other one thing. And, almost more than anything else, it reveals the supernatural power at work in the growth of Christianity, enabling it to triumph over such bitter opposition in spite of the fact that those who accepted it knew they would be called to face all kinds of persecution.

When heretical Nestorian Christianity went into China it lost this exclusiveness and spread rapidly, until a fourth of the nation became nominally Christian. Probably one of the chief reasons why God allowed that type of Christianity to be blotted out was that it was not worth preserving.

V. CHRISTIANITY DID NOT APPEAL TO MAN'S LOWER NATURE

Nothing about Christianity appealed to the lower sensual nature of man. In the Christian view of the relation between the sexes, true marriage was the union of one man and one woman upon the basis of enduring love. The Christian home was made the cornerstone of the new religion, the father and mother being enjoined to leave their respective homes to establish a new home, in which the wife should love, honor, and obey her husband, and the husband love, honor, and cherish his wife, treating her in all honor even with the same love with which Christ loves his church. The children were charged with obeying their parents, and the parents were given the duty of training their children in the knowledge of and love for Christ, the real Head of the home. All gross sensuality was forbidden, and love was made one of the holiest relationships of life.

But not only in the marriage relationship were the natural appetites of man placed under control and spiritualized: divorce, except on grounds of adultery and complete and unremediable desertion, was forbidden. Gluttony and intemperance of all kinds were likewise condemned. The Christian was taught that every appetite and passion must be subjected to the will and control of the Lord Jesus Christ. To us in a world where these have become commonplace standards, and where it is generally recognized that Christians and Christianity stand for them, the remarkable nature of these requirements has lost its strangeness. To be sure, before the time of Christ, men sometimes lived moral lives, but the moral man was the exception, and by far the

larger number of people in heathen lands lived lives of the most undisciplined and uncontrolled license. Chastity, while not unknown, was extremely rare, and unselfishness was so exceptional as to be almost unknown.

Into such a world came Christianity. Of course the Jews who accepted Christ had many of them been living lives of comparative morality before they became Christians, yet, whether the incident in John 8:1 ff. is canonical or not, it is probably true and, if true, shows us that the morality of even the religious was superficial. Christianity demanded a complete revolution in men's lives. To us in the twentieth century this does not seem as strange as it must have seemed to the people of that day for we have all the advantage of a public opinion more or less fashioned by Christianity, even in lands where the majority of the people were heathen. Few indeed are those who would sincerely deny that the ethics of Christianity are superior to the ethics of heathendom. But at the time of which we are writing, when Christianity first began to expand in the Roman Empire, unselfishness not only was rare but was despised as beneath the consideration of a Roman, and humility in the sense that Christ taught it was unknown. The consciences of men had become so corrupted by sin that the grossest sins were not only practiced and condoned but commended and exalted to the position of virtues! It was against such moral and ethical standards that Christianity had to make its way! And the fact that it conquered is nothing less than miraculous, for all the natural tendencies of men's natures, as well as the force of public opinion, were directly opposed to its moral standards.

VI. VICES NOT EXALTED INTO VIRTUES

We have perhaps already sufficiently discussed the moral standards of Christianity to make it clear that none of man's natural tendencies was given free rein, and of course it follows that none of the evil proclivities of men's hearts was exalted into a virtue, as was done in other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Man is naturally lazy and selfish, and to make these tendencies into virtues would lead many to adopt a religion that encouraged this. Likewise to make gross sexual immorality a part of religious practices, as is done in Hinduism, for example, would appeal to many people's baser side. Buddhism exalted the negation of effort and desire and urged its devotees to become

parasites on society. Christianity, on the other hand, condemned both laziness³ and sexual immorality,⁴ and by example and precept commended a life of honest labor and self-restraint. Paul himself was an example to all the churches; he earned his living by tentmaking the while he preached the gospel wherever he went. As for selfishness, all the teachings of Christianity was directly against unbridled selfishness. This in itself was one of its most revolutionary doctrines, and one which seemed least understandable to the pagan mind. In fact, rational unselfishness was the cornerstone of Christianity, and unbridled selfishness was good evidence that the profession of belief in Christ was false. One of the first fruits of Christianity, showing that the believer was really born again, was a life that showed unselfishness as its controlling motive. This, of course, did not mean that legitimate self-interests were decried, as long as they injured no one and did not result in covetousness or lack of charity toward those in need.

VII. RELIGION AND MORALITY NOT SEPARATED

While the religious element in Christianity occupied the chief place in this religion, it was in no sense separated from morality. Christianity was no mere system of intellectual philosophy, having no relation to life, as certain other religions were. Nor was it, on the other hand, a mere code of ethics like Confucianism or certain modern varieties of religious teachings. It was *both*, but the two were united in such a way that, while man was in no sense to receive salvation as a reward for a good moral life, on the other hand he could not receive salvation without living to the utmost of his ability according to the standards of morality and ethics set forth in the Scriptures. This moral life was the fruit of his religion, and unless it showed itself as a fruit, the religion was proved to be a vain profession of the lips. Now such a combination as this was new in religion. Moreover, it presented a combination of religion and morality peculiarly distasteful to different types of minds. Many men did not object to being called upon to give intellectual assent to certain doctrines which commended themselves to their minds, so long as they could live as they pleased and get all the selfish pleasure they wanted out of life. The pagan religions were built upon this basis. On the other hand, to other people, in whom the moral instinct was

³ II Thessalonians 3:11.

⁴ I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 10:8; Acts 15:20; etc.

more developed, an ethical code in which salvation could be secured by certain acts of merit offered a peculiar appeal. But the combination of both elements in one religion, and especially the nature of the elements combined, made the religion of the cross a stumbling block and an offense.⁵ The point to which we call attention is the fact that these elements *were* combined in one religion, and that the combination made them even more distasteful to the natural instincts of man than the separate elements themselves were; and the fact that Christianity spread in spite of this is additional evidence that there was a divine power working in and through the gospel and likewise in the hearts of men, changing them and making them ready to welcome a message which was repellent to the natural man.

VIII. FORCES WHICH CHRISTIANITY OPPOSED

We have seen that Christianity relied for its growth upon none of the things which the other great religions relied upon. None of the natural causes which gave impetus to the spread of Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism was operative in the case of the spread of Christianity. We will now call attention to a number of forces which were ranged in opposition to the spread of Christianity.

1. *Moral regeneration was necessary.* We have already mentioned the fact that Christianity required a higher moral standard of living than any other religion, but we now want to point out that Christianity required more than a moral life: it called for a complete *moral regeneration!* It demanded that a man not only *do* rightly but *think* and *feel* rightly! The change which Christianity required was a change in man's whole mental attitude toward life. He who was naturally self-centered must cease thinking of self alone, and begin to think of the kingdom of God, and of other people. He who was endeavoring to secure power or position or wealth, or who was living for pleasure alone, must be willing to give up all that and begin to serve others and to live in true humility, that he might better serve his Lord and his fellow man. Most of all, hatred and envy and sinful desires must be put away from his heart and life, and in their place a wholehearted love for Christ and for those for whom Christ died must burn with a white heat that would send him forth with a passionate zeal to proclaim the gospel to others. The early Christians believed that the power to pro-

⁵ I Corinthians 1:23-24.

duce this change of heart came through the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of believers, and that man in his natural state could not bring it about. They found that the New Testament taught this doctrine, and they believed it thoroughly because it corresponded with what they saw in their own lives and in the lives of those around them, both of sin and of the effects of divine grace. Whether their belief was correct or not is another question,⁶ but the fact that they held it cannot be doubted. Approaching the problem from the human side, consider for a moment how preposterous such a demand must have seemed to those with whom the early Christians came in contact! What chance had Christianity of conquering the Roman world, steeped as it was in iniquity, with a religion which demanded such a revolutionary change in human character? And we must remember that with all their faults even their enemies bore constant witness to the high moral character of the lives of the early Christians. We cannot say that they merely *claimed* to have regenerated lives while in reality they did not. History bears too faithful witness to their high moral character to deny that a marvelous change did actually take place in their lives when they became Christians. The careful student of history who does not believe that this change was brought about by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit must account in some other way both for the change and for the fact that no other religion before or since has been able to produce such a change in men's lives. He must also account for the fact that this change took place, not in the lives of a few obscure persons, but in the lives of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men and women who had before been living in the worst kind of sin! How did such a revolutionary moral change come about when the same change never occurred in the lives of men of other religions before that time or since, except where Christianity had gone?⁷ Can any explanation other than that the divine Spirit of

⁶ Of course I believe this same doctrine.

⁷ On the very day that I was writing the above paragraph, a letter from a former missionary to Korea, Mrs. William Chisholm, told the story of a Korean murderess, who had killed two of her own children. While she was in prison, one day in despair she jumped into a well in the prison courtyard to end it all. She was rescued and ordered by the women guards to attend the Bible class which Mrs. Chisholm was conducting in prison. There she heard of the saving power of the Son of God. With the other women prisoners in the class, she began to memorize whole chapters from the Gospel of John. Soon she became a radiant Christian and actually became a Bible woman among the other prisoners. Just recently, after twelve years in prison, she has been released, and continually praises God for His goodness to her. This same gospel works today!

God was working supernaturally in the hearts of men account for the results which we see written so indelibly on the pages of history?

2. *The cross of Christ was odious to Jews and pagans.* To make the problem of the acceptance of Christianity by such large numbers of people more difficult, we must add the fact that the central doctrine of the Christian faith in those earliest days was a crucified and risen Christ. The early Christians boasted of the cross, and of the fact that their Master had been crucified. His death—and the significance which they placed upon it, owing to the statements of both Christ and the apostles in the New Testament Epistles and Gospels—was the chief glory of the early Christian Church. Each individual Christian felt that Christ had died for *him*, that he received his pardon for sin and the gift of eternal life because of Christ's death on the cross. This fact filled his heart with gratitude toward the Man-God who had made it possible, and he never ceased to make the knowledge of redemption known to all who would listen to him. A recent popular writer declared that he rejected the doctrine of substitutionary atonement and the "monstrous doctrine that life after death [i.e., blessed life] depended upon conscious acceptance of Christ." In such a position he is strictly in accord with the Jews and pagans of the Roman Empire of the first three centuries of the Christian era. They too found difficulty in accepting these teachings. To Christians of today after twenty centuries there is little or nothing to be ashamed of in the fact that the Founder of our religion was crucified on a cross, but to the Greek or Roman of that day His crucifixion was sufficient to brand Him as the lowest kind of criminal! Only traitors, slaves, and the very worst criminals were ever crucified. This meant that wherever Christianity went, as soon as it was known that its Founder had been crucified, all Greeks and Romans and even the Jews themselves could not help but be prejudiced against it and look down upon it with scorn and derision. This natural prejudice had to be overcome before they could be interested in the new religion, and it offered one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of the Christian faith. Nevertheless Christianity grew and multiplied! Is not this additional proof of a supernatural cause at work aiding its spread?

3. *Christians faced persecution and death.* When we consider what Christianity had to offer to those who followed it, we can only marvel at its rapid growth. It offered no wealth or honor or position. Christians could hope for no political preferment or opportunities of material gain; on the contrary they faced the confiscation of their property,

ostracism from their friends, and possible persecution, imprisonment, and even death as soon as the fact that they were believers became known to the authorities. Yet in spite of all these things, from the humblest slave to members of the imperial household itself, the followers of the lowly Nazarene boldly and even triumphantly gloried in their sufferings! The many fierce persecutions which the church suffered under the different Roman emperors only acted as oil upon the fire of the Christians' zeal. The greater their persecution, the more the Christians preached, and the wider spread the gospel message. Soldiers in the Roman legions, entrusted with the task of burning the martyrs, after witnessing the way in which they suffered death became followers of Christ themselves. The religion expanded in spite of all the most strenuous efforts to check it and stamp it out on the part of the Roman government. Nothing could stop it and at last it conquered the Roman government itself! Now such a phenomenon must have an adequate cause to account for it. We have already shown that none of the causes at work in the spread of other religions was at work in the spread of Christianity. We have likewise shown a few of the obstacles against which Christianity had to struggle. What cause or causes could have accounted for the outreach of Christianity?

Let us examine the causes which historians who do not believe in Christianity claim to have been responsible for its growth, and see whether they are adequate to explain it or are only the effects of other and deeper causes which we must ultimately trace to supernatural sources.

IX. GIBBON'S FIVE CAUSES

Gibbon, the historian, claimed that the rapid spread of Christianity was due to five causes: the zeal of the early Christians; the belief in future rewards and punishments; the power of miracles; the austere (pure) morals of the Christians; and the compact church organization.

1. *Zeal of the Christians.* But what caused their zeal? Was it not that they were so thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christianity? Was it not that their minds were so completely under the sway of the Holy Spirit that they believed nothing was really worth while except the service of the Master? If this was true, then their zeal was accounted for by the fact that the Holy Spirit was quickening their hearts and setting fire to their enthusiasm. Could such a multitude have been

deceived in thinking that Christianity was supernatural and at the same time true? Of course we may admit the theoretical possibility of such deception, but all the attendant circumstances make it highly improbable. Christianity made entirely too extravagant claims for itself—and claims which could be tested by those early Christians through living witnesses—for it to be possible for such great numbers of persons to be deceived. If Christianity is true, their zeal is adequately accounted for. If it is *not* true, the whole Christian movement is left hanging in the air, unexplained!

2. *Rewards and punishments.* As for their belief in future rewards and punishments, here again we have an effect and not a cause. They believed the reality of heaven and hell because it was taught in the Bible, and they had independent proof that the Scriptures were true. If true, then *of course* this would become one of the strongest motives for their preaching the gospel and for people's acceptance of Christ as their Saviour from hell, their door to heaven. To make it plainer, let us suppose for a moment that Christianity is false. It would have been perfectly possible to get evidence to that effect from Judea and the Jews, and if the early Christians had become convinced that the evidence was against the truth of Christianity, what would have happened? Would they still have cherished the same beliefs in regard to heaven and hell? Certainly not! Christianity would have remained an obscure sect, followed at the most by only a few fanatics. The fact that this did not occur is one of the strongest assurances that Christianity could actually present convincing proofs that its claims were true. We must always remember that Christianity differed from every other religion in that it did not present teachings which it claimed were always true; it demanded belief in historical facts. It was primarily a *factual* religion. The center of its teaching was not the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as the modern liberals tell us; it was the fact that the Eternal Son of God had added to Himself a human nature at a definite time in the history of the world, that He had lived as a man among man, had performed certain miracles, been crucified on the cross for the sins of His people, and been raised from the dead on the third day. And all this was not said to have happened centuries before when men could not test the evidence, but in the lifetime of men then living! Now these events must have been very startling to the men of Asia Minor and Africa, Macedonia and Greece, Italy and the West. Travelers were coming and going over the splendid Roman roads

constantly, and it would have been the easiest thing in the world to inquire concerning the truth of the alleged facts from firsthand witnesses. The Book of Acts shows that the people of that time were no more credulous than the men of today; it is absolutely unthinkable to suppose that such facts would have remained unchallenged among so many enemies. Indeed, we know that the facts *were* challenged over and over again, but no evidence against them could be discovered. We cannot emphasize too strongly that all this Christian teaching was not a propaganda for an intellectual ideal or ideals which might be reasoned about and belief in which might be secured through argument. Christianity stood or fell with the truth or falsity of certain *historical* events—events which had publicly occurred in that generation in one of the central countries of the empire, only a short distance away from those who were asked to believe in them. Christianity presented a peculiarly vulnerable front to its enemies. All they had to do to make the whole movement collapse was to present convincing evidence that the incidents had not occurred as the Christians claimed. We know that there were enemies, and that they moved heaven and earth to get such evidence, but that Christianity persisted in spite of their efforts to prove it false is one of the strongest proofs that its facts were *actual facts* and not fictions of the imagination.

3. *Miracles*. One of the principal reasons for the spread of Christianity was the miracles performed by Christ and the apostles and, according to many good authorities, by people in the Christian Church for many years afterward. But what are miracles if not the manifestation of supernatural power at work in the spread of the religion itself? The peculiar thing about the Christian miracles is their sanity and the way in which they are attested by the best kind of evidence. This evidence was accessible to all who wanted to examine it and offered absolutely convincing proof of the truth of the religion. No wonder the religion grew! They are the most cogent confirmation we can get that the spread of Christianity was due to supernatural power.

4. *Pure moral standards*. No doubt the fact that the Christians had such pure standards of morals and lived up to them to such an extent had a great influence in making the non-Christians favorably inclined toward Christianity, but as we have already shown, a high moral standard would be a hindrance rather than a help when it came to persuading others to *accept* Christianity, for its rigorous demands would never be a recommendation to those who were living a life of

sin—to most of the people, that is, in the Roman Empire. Only the power of the Holy Spirit could change their hearts and make them love to do good and hate to do evil.

5. *Church organization.* The last of Gibbon's claims, that the spread of Christianity was due to its compact church organization, is similarly an effect and not a cause. No amount of church organization could have extended a religion such as Christianity if that religion had been founded on fiction! Certainly it had a compact organization, and that organization helped to propagate the gospel message effectively, but that organization would never have remained either compact or effective without the divine power of the Holy Spirit vitalizing it. There were other organizations just as compact and just as well ordered, but they never conquered an empire under such circumstances. Moreover, the growth of Christianity could not have been principally due to organization because before it spread over the empire it was neither compact nor well organized. Each individual did as the Holy Spirit directed, and the reason all did the same thing was not that they were under the control of an organization but that the Holy Spirit led them to do the same thing! Historical research is showing that the episcopate was a comparatively late development, and it is the very earliest spread of Christianity that we must account for most of all. During the early years it was *not* backed by a compact organization but was controlled entirely by the Holy Spirit.

X. RENAN'S CAUSES

In like manner Renan in his *Marc Aurèle* mentioned three causes of the spread of Christianity: (1) the belief in immortality; (2) the offer of complete pardon to every sinner; and (3) the moral reform which the world needed at that particular time. Here again the effect is mistaken for the cause, and the need is taken as the cause of the thing which supplied it! The Christian believed in immortality and believed that his sin would be completely pardoned because he was convinced that Christianity was true, and one of the main reasons why he was convinced that Christianity was true was that he found it attested by miracle and the fulfillment of prophecy. Thus we see the direct part which the supernatural played in its spread. As for the need of moral reform, this cannot be doubted, but the world has always needed that, and Christianity has been the only religion which could adequately

meet the need. And that is but another way of saying that Christianity is the only true religion, and the only religion that adequately meets the needs of the human heart for redemption from sin. But to say that this is the cause of its rapid spread is to miss the whole meaning of Christianity. It was the *intrinsic worth* of Christianity that made it adequate to supply the need of the human heart for salvation, and that intrinsic worth was given to it by its *truth* and the supernatural power at work in the lives of the apostles and humble Christians. Moreover, to say that the need of the world for moral reform was the cause of the spread of Christianity is to miss entirely the fact that most people who *need* to reform don't *want* to reform! The people who needed reformation most were the ones who fought it the hardest. In no sense, then, can we say that the need of the world for reformation was the cause of the acceptance of Christianity. The need was there, but the only way it could be supplied was for the hearts that were at enmity with God to be touched by the power of the Holy Spirit and made willing to listen to the gospel message of salvation by grace through belief in Jesus Christ alone. That means that Christianity was a supernatural religion and was spread by supernatural causes.

XI. OTHER HISTORIANS' CAUSES OF THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

In a similar way all historians who have tried to account for the spread of Christianity ignoring the power of the Holy Spirit make the mistake of putting the effect in place of the cause. The only adequate cause which will explain it is the fact that the divine power of God the Holy Spirit was working in it and in the hearts of men, winning them to Christ. We may enumerate all the good features of Christianity which rendered it intrinsically excellent, and point to all the external conditions such as a universal language (Greek), good roads which made access to all parts of the empire easily possible, a stable Roman government which gave peace to the empire, and the various other circumstances which prepared the world for Christianity, but to say that they alone account for the spread of Christianity is like saying that the crowing of the cock makes the sun rise, or the barking of the dog causes the rising of the moon, or the waving of the grass causes the blowing of the wind! A mighty effect must have a mighty cause, and the only cause mighty enough to produce this effect is the power of Almighty God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOST REMARKABLE BOOK IN THE WORLD

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Christians Charged with Superstitious Reverence for the Bible

One of the most frequent charges brought against Christianity by those who do not believe in its supernatural character is that Christians regard the Bible with a superstitious reverence entirely out of relation to its real nature. These opponents admit that the Bible is a remarkable book but hold that it is on a par with other remarkable books of purely human origin. While it contains truth and shows much spiritual insight, it is on the same level with other great books, and its statements in regard to doctrine must all be tested in the crucible of the human intellect before they can be accepted as truth. Further, with the truth is mixed a mass of more or less worthless and unreliable tradition which must all be weighed carefully by the reason before the truth can be separated from the error. This weighing process is a task for the critic, say these people, and nothing unreasonable or contrary to experience can be accepted as true, even though it is found in the Bible. The categories of thought in which the religious thinkers of the first centuries clothed their religious experiences are not binding on us in the twentieth century, and we can restate these abiding experiences in the mental categories of our own time. Of course what these men really mean is that what in Paul's day were believed to be facts were *not facts at all*, so that they can be discarded!

Most of the Neo-Orthodox thinkers have agreed in part or in whole with these critical views of the Bible. In an attempt to retain what they regard as basic doctrines of the Bible, they hold that revelation from God does not depend on the written records but comes directly from

God upon the occasion of the proclamation of the word of God. Such a revelation from God may be made without reference to the truth or falsity of the words of the Bible, so they think that they can retain the truths of the Bible teachings even though the historical accounts may be filled with error. The difficulty with this and the whole critical position is that, if we cannot believe in the historical accounts in the Bible, what guarantee do we have that the doctrinal statements are true? To reject the historical accounts would mean that all objective standards of religious truth would be destroyed and the only thing left would be the subjective standard of ethics and religion of each individual religious thinker. The result would be the destruction of any authoritative religion, and Christianity would eventually crumble and disappear. If we are to hold to any certainty in our Christian religion, we must be able to trust the validity of the teachings of the Bible, both historical and doctrinal.

It is the purpose of this and the following chapters to examine the Bible dispassionately as we would examine any other book and see whether it seems to be a trustworthy book of more than human origin. To some this will seem like abandonment of Christian presuppositions and inviting the enemy into the citadel of the Christian castle of faith. To banish such fears of evangelical Christians let us hasten to state that our belief in the trustworthiness of the *whole* Bible is so strong that we are not afraid of descending to the level of the destructive critics of the Bible, for the sake of argument, confident that the Bible will stand every critical test that may be proposed.

In reviewing the excellent book, *The Bible as History*, by Werner Keller, Dr. Nelson Glueck, in the *New York Times* of October 28, 1956, made the following statement: "The reviewer has spent many years in Biblical archaeology, and, in company with his colleagues, has made discoveries confirming in outline or in detail historical statements in the Bible. He is prepared to go further and say that no archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture." Since Dr. Glueck is one of the most respected and reliable archaeologists of the past fifty years, these words carry tremendous weight and authority.

B. False Assumptions of the Critics

In the attacks of the critics upon the facts of the Bible record there are at least three false assumptions. If we understand this we will not be quite as gullible when we read what they say.

1. The first presupposition is that *the human intellect is the final judge of the reasonableness of any doctrine taught in the Bible*. Now we submit that no one has a right to make such claim. If there is a God, and if *God* teaches that a certain doctrine, such as the Trinity or Virgin Birth, is true, then it is not man's place to decide whether or not it is *reasonable*! Of course this presupposes that the Bible is God's Word, but if God has revealed the doctrine, and we are convinced that the evidence shows that God has revealed the doctrine, it is man's duty to *accept* it, even though he may not be able to understand all about it or to prove its truth by the human reason. *If* God has taught it, then all man has a right to do is to *accept* it. The whole question resolves itself into whether God has or has not taught it. In deciding *this* question man is perfectly justified in using his reason to the fullest extent in judging the evidence. It is purely a matter of fact, and as such must be judged according to the laws of evidence. But if the intellect is convinced that God actually did teach these doctrines in the Bible through inspired prophets and inspired writers of the various books of the Bible, then the intellect must not set itself up as a judge of the reasonableness of the doctrines. Man has a right to reason about the meaning of the doctrines taught, but he has no right to reason about the truth of the doctrines themselves after their meaning has been decided upon. To do so would be to put oneself above God and to question His wisdom. Some men apparently do not hesitate to do this, but to one who has average intelligence, such a course is nothing less than blasphemy.

2. The next presupposition is that the human reason is the final judge as to whether something could or could not happen. However, if an event has actually occurred, reason cannot abolish it by saying that it could not have happened. If the evidence shows that it did occur, it did.

3. The third presupposition is that anything contrary to present experience cannot have happened in the past. This was Hume's position: that no amount of evidence would be sufficient to prove that a real miracle contrary to the laws of nature could ever have happened in the past. We have already discussed the question of the uniformity of nature, in Chapter V, and if our reasoning there was correct, there is no ground for the position that God could not have intervened in natural laws in the past because He does not so intervene in the present. If our God is not a finite God bound by the laws of the universe which He created, then we have no right to deny the possibility,

for sufficient reason, of divine intervention in the universe. Any person who believes in the omnipotence of God agrees in principle to the most stupendous fact in the universe and logically, at least, has admitted all that goes with theism including miracles and predictive prophecy. Unfortunately many people do not see the logical implication in the belief that God is all-powerful.

II. THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

A. Translations into Many Languages

If we approach the Bible as we would approach any other book, there are a number of things which we must notice about it. In the first place, we notice the number of languages into which it has been translated. Whenever any great book has appeared in the past it has been translated into several other languages. Rare indeed is the book that is translated into as many as a score of languages and dialects. But the Bible, according to the latest information available, has been translated in whole or in part into over a thousand languages and dialects! Where is the book that can equal such a record? It is a book more widely read than any other in the world.

B. More Copies Sold Than of Any Other Book

A greater number of copies of the Bible have been sold than of any other book. With any other book the number of editions it is accorded is very limited. During the first few years after a book first appears, several editions may be printed and sold. After a while the number sold decreases, and in a relatively short time, unless the book is exceptional, it drops out of print. A few rare books of extraordinary merit are reprinted after a lapse of years. A *very* few, which have won a position of permanence in literature, such as Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and some others, continue to have quite a large circulation every year, necessitating reprints of some thousands of copies every few years. But in the case of the Bible, what do we find? We cannot tell how many copies of the Bible were made in the early history of the church, though we know that it had a large circulation even in the days when every manuscript had to be copied by hand, and it was a crime to possess a copy. But from the time when printing with movable type came into use in western Europe, editions of the Bible have come out in ever increasing numbers. And most remarkable, during the several hundred

years since that time, every year has seen an increase in the number of copies printed and sold. Today, millions of copies are sold every year, and the Book of books continues to be the most popular "best seller" wherever it is sold. This in itself is a marvelous tribute to the Bible as literature. Not only is it true that far more copies are sold year after year than of any other book, but it is likewise true that the paper on which it is printed and the bindings used are far better than those of any other book sold anywhere in the world. (Note: See Appendix.)

C. The Bible's Effect on Other Literature

Our wonder grows as we look at the quantity of books that have been written about the Bible, the number of commentaries on the Bible that have appeared, and above all the effect which the Bible has had on other literature. It has been well said that a man who does not know his Bible cannot understand secular literature, for there is hardly a book worth reading that does not have some allusion to the Bible, and the greatest books in literature are filled with allusions to it. But not only is the Bible's effect on literature seen in the frequency with which it is quoted; the greatest writers have been men and women who were saturated with the Bible. Ruskin owed his ability to write successfully, he said, to the fact that as a child he had been required to learn large portions of the Bible. Other great writers have given similar testimony. It is not too much to say that the very style of the greatest writers has been molded and shaped by the reading and study of the Bible.

D. The Diversity of the Bible

Another remarkable feature of the Bible is the diversity of the literature which it contains. In it are poetry, history, biography, short stories (whose gripping interest surpasses the best fiction and yet whose vitality lies in the fact that they are true), letters, parables, proverbs, prophecies, and other kinds of literature. Yet despite the variety of subject matter and form, the style is everywhere the finest found anywhere in literature. The stories and parables are the despair of the modern fiction writer, for their style can never be equaled in lucidity, purity of diction, and interest. As for the history and biography of the Bible, this is the only book whose heroes are described in all their characteristics with no attempt to gloss over their sins and shortcomings—or to belittle their good qualities. Events are described as they actually occurred, in

an unprejudiced manner that does not fail to impress even the most exacting critic with the truth of the narrative.

E. The Bible Up to Date

One of the most noteworthy features of the Bible is its up-to-date-ness. Books of science are out of date almost before they are off the press, antiquated by new discoveries. Books of history are constantly being replaced by others, as new archaeological and other historical evidence comes to light. The strange thing about the Bible is that it never becomes antiquated. New archaeological discoveries merely confirm its accuracy, while the teachings, biographies, and stories remain just as fresh and applicable today as they were nineteen hundred years ago. As for natural science, while the Bible does not pretend to teach science, we find in a remarkable way that its facts do not conflict with the assured discoveries of science, and that the seeming discrepancies between the facts of the Bible and the theories of science have been cleared up again and again by the abandonment of the scientific theories as new evidence comes to light.

F. The Bible as the Source of Moral Strength

General Robert E. Lee, whose military genius defended the Confederacy against almost impossible odds for so many years, said of the Bible: "The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance; and which in all perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me delight and strength."¹ General U. S. Grant, under whose leadership General Lee was at last defeated, said of the teachings of the Bible: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties, write its precepts in your heart and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to it we must look as our guide in the future."² Even from the point of view of morality alone we cannot neglect the Bible as the source of moral strength, for its teachings have molded the lives of countless great men of the past.

G. The Interest of the Bible

The Bible is the most interesting book in the world. Not only does it grip and hold the imagination of the reader the first time it is read,

¹ Quoted by Frank E. Gaebelein in *Exploring the Bible*, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*

but its fascination increases with each subsequent reading. Other books, after they have been read two or three times, go in the bookcase and are seldom referred to again. Their depths have been plumbed with a few readings. But how different the Bible is! The oftener one reads it, the more one enjoys it. It never grows old or tiresome, and its depths of meaning are never plumbed. The deeper one goes the broader becomes the vein of gold and the richer the ore. Nor is it a book only for the adult or for the educated mind. Children and uneducated adults enjoy it as much as the greatest scholars. Its stories are a never failing source of delight to children because they combine vivid interest and truth. As one grows older, the passages of Scripture committed to memory as a child become the most precious treasures of one's mind. The Bible comforts in sorrow, strengthens in weakness, cheers in despondency, guides in perplexity, soothes in weariness. It is bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. It offers milk for babes and meat for strong men. Whatever the need of the soul, if one goes to the Bible, one can find the need supplied. *It is the most wonderful book in the world.*

III. THE ETHICAL STANDARDS OF THE BIBLE

A. *Non-Christian Ethical Standards*

From an ethical point of view, as well as a literary, the Bible is the most wonderful book in the world. It contains the highest code of morals found anywhere, and it furnishes the only ultimate motive for a life of obedience to that code, namely, love for God, leading us to obey His commands. In order that this may become evident, let us look for a moment at the various ethical standards outside Christianity.

1. *Hedonism.* One of the commonest ethical systems is that called hedonism. This is the view which holds that man's chief aim in life is to be happy, and that everything which contributes to his happiness is right, and everything which interferes with or prevents his happiness is wrong. All a man's actions are to be judged by the amount of happiness they bring him. This system of ethics is seldom defended publicly by its advocates, but the number of followers is almost unlimited. It is the logical one for a man to follow if he has no belief in God or an afterlife. Certainly if there is no God to punish us for anything we do, and the only evil we need to fear is that which will injure us here on earth or interfere with our happiness, we might well follow this system were it not for the fact that happiness pursued as an end tends to

vanish; it comes only as a by-product of duty well done. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" is the motto which everyone without God might logically adopt.

The man who follows such an ideal in life may conceivably be a man of good reputation in the community, for he will understand that it is to his interest to obey the law. He may even be what we speak of as a public-spirited person, for he will realize that if the public welfare is promoted, his own happiness will likewise be fostered. He may be a good husband and father, because his happiness is increased by seeing his family happy. He may be industrious, because he realizes that he cannot have the pleasures of life he desires unless he labors for them.

On the other hand, he may be the vilest of sensualists, or a drunken sot, because he gets the most pleasure out of life that way, and he is to be considered no more reprehensible in this guise than in the one we have just been discussing, because he chooses to take his pleasures in this way instead of enjoying the more respectable joys of life. If happiness is the chief end of life, then no action which gives happiness to the individual is to be condemned.

It will be seen at a glance that such a system of ethics is a self-contradiction. To seek personal happiness as the chief end in life is to defeat one's own purpose and lose happiness. As we said above, happiness comes principally as a by-product of duty well done. A life which knows no such thing as duty will know nothing of the joy of service or of duty performed with no view to one's own happiness, but because it is *right* to perform it, and because one has love for mankind and God in his heart. We have only to imagine what the world would be like if everyone sought to secure his own happiness alone, and if any means he might choose were considered right, to see the fallacy of hedonism as a philosophy of life. Such a world would soon end in anarchy because if everyone sought his own happiness first, each person would be the final judge of what would give him the most happiness, and there would be a constant battle between individuals with conflicting interests. If two people decided that they needed the same thing in order to secure their own personal happiness, nothing but conflict would result, for there would be no one superior to them to act as arbitrator, or as judge or police to enforce the law. The only world in which a hedonist can live comfortably is a world in which the majority of people are *not* hedonists, at whose expense he can secure his own happiness. As a matter of fact, though a great many people live as hedon-

ists, very few attempt to defend it as a theory of ethics unless it is combined with the theory of altruistic hedonism, called utilitarianism.

2. *Utilitarianism*. Utilitarianism is the theory of hedonism applied to humanity, especially to one's own state or nation. The theory says that the chief end in life is to secure the greatest amount of happiness for the largest number of people. The only standard of right is whether something is useful to society. If it is not useful to society it is wrong. An action is right in proportion as it promotes the happiness of the people among whom one lives, and wrong in proportion as it tends to produce unhappiness. Of course this theory is infinitely superior to the one just discussed, for under it a just and stable government is possible whose aim will be to secure the greatest amount of happiness for the individuals of the nation. Moreover, such a system of ethics fosters all the acts which we are in the habit of applauding, for since its aim is to secure the good of society, self-sacrifice will become a high and noble thing. But though utilitarianism has much to commend it, there are several vital objections to it as an aim in life for either an individual or a people.

a. In the first place there is no standard by which we can estimate the relative value to society of certain acts. One man's judgment is as good as another's as to what is the best thing for society. Uniformity of judgment at any time could be secured only by accepting the judgment of the most powerful group of individuals in the state. They would then impose their judgment upon the rest of the state by persuasion, or, failing that, by force. If a despot, like Hitler, were to impose his will upon the rest of the nation by force, only a superior force could prevent him. Even if a benevolent despot sought to impose upon the nation what he thought best, the only way he could do it if persuasion failed would be by force. It would be, therefore, only his judgment against that of the rest of society as to what was for the best interest of society. The standard would be an entirely subjective one since there would be no way of telling what would most benefit society in the long run.

(1) For example, since 1933 the United States has been off the gold standard. As a result, the nation has been on a slight inflation jag, and millions of people have had their property in effect confiscated by the government through depreciation of the currency. That really means that, though stealing by individuals is a crime, stealing on a vast scale by the government in order to produce a phony prosperity is held

to be allowable, though it inevitably causes eventual economic depression. This is at present the dominant economic philosophy, because those in authority believe that it serves the interests of society best. Now a great many people are convinced that this course will lead to runaway inflation in time, and eventually to economic ruin for the vast majority of the people. These critics are not in power, however, and though runaway inflation produced by national deficit spending would seem to be far from best for society in the long run, how can it be prevented with no moral code binding on nations as well as on individuals, if what is good for society is to be decided by elected governments?

(2) There seems little doubt that some of the communist leaders of China and Soviet Russia have been really actuated by altruistic motives, in attempting to spread communism over the rest of the world. Many if not most of these leaders really believe that capitalism is a curse upon mankind, and they believe that the dictatorship of the proletariat will eventually bring communism upon the whole world and be of great benefit to all mankind. If there is no objective standard of right and wrong such as we have in the Bible, just how can it be shown that they are basically wrong all down the line? Even though they must wade through blood in every nation in order to establish international communism, which they believe is for the best interests of the world, what right have we to condemn this materialistic utilitarianism which they claim insures the happiness of the greatest number of people in the long run? With no unchangeable external and absolute standard of right and wrong, how could one condemn communism, if utilitarianism were accepted as the basis of international ethics? By the time communism triumphed over the world and it could be plainly seen it was not for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people, it would be too late to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(3) Moreover, there is nothing permanent in a utilitarian system of ethics. Without any standard for determining what is best for society in the long run, if those in power at one time were to lose their power, other individuals or groups might then change the whole system and establish what *they* believed to be for the best interests of society. Thus the goal of the greatest good for society would never be permanently realized.

(4) It is claimed, however, by the advocates of utilitarianism that the experience of mankind furnishes the basis for progress. Ideas that are tried out by one generation will be sifted by the following genera-

tion and the ones which do not contribute to the happiness of the race will be discarded. By this trial-and-error method humanity will develop toward the ultimate goal of the greatest amount of happiness for everyone.

In reply to this we must appeal to actual history for light on the matter. The Belgian Congo in Africa made material progress in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Under the stern but benevolent rule of the Belgians, after the cruel and despotic regime of King Leopold in the first twenty-five years of the century, the colony moved forward in all fields. Intertribal warfare was suppressed. Then came independence. In the short period of a year the material prosperity of most of the Congo was ruined, and the old tribal warfare broke out again. The benefits of the past were largely destroyed. The Congo had not learned by experience what was for its happiness.

After World War I, inflation in Germany wiped out the savings of the people and brought economic ruin to millions. Yet in the United States, with the example of Germany and many other countries, where inflation was disastrously tried, before her, moderate inflation is occurring and is advocated by many politicians and some economists, in spite of the fact that there is no instance in history where inflation brought lasting prosperity.

No amount of past experience with the evils incidental to plural marriages will prevent the new generation from following in the footsteps of the old. The experience of thousands of years proves the evil effect of the system of prostitution so prevalent in both civilized and uncivilized lands, yet this experience has no deterrent effect upon each new generation when hearts are bent on evil. Experience teaches that stealing is bad for society, but this fact has never kept people from stealing whose hearts are filled with covetousness, whenever they thought they could do so with impunity. Nor is it sufficient to reply that society has never approved of these things, and as long as it does not approve of them, it can advance. Even if it were true that society has never approved them, the fact that they occur so widely would be an effectual barrier to progress. If it were true that society has not put the stamp of approval upon these evil customs why has not some one of the nations outside Christianity advanced during the past centuries? History shows conclusively that before modern Christian civilization, or at least nominally Christian civilization, touched the nations outside Christianity, they made no real advance in eliminating the evil condi-

tions mentioned. Certainly no one would claim that these nations had already reached the acme of perfection, the goal of the greatest good for the greatest number. If experience is a good teacher of ethical standards, why have not those nations progressed in the past centuries?

Doubtless nationalists would claim that colonialism kept these peoples back during the past century, and communists would probably assert that capitalism is responsible for the lack of progress. The very existence of these conflicting theories of economics and government shows how impossible it is for people to learn by experience and profit nationally by these lessons. Without pointing out the weaknesses and errors of the conflicting systems, we must examine another argument which their advocates might advance. They would say that there has never been a sufficient number of people to force society to follow what they believe to be in the best interests of society. They would say that until enough people are willing to work for the good of mankind, it will be impossible for society to advance through experience. This points up another sad fact.

It is not true that society as a whole in the backward nations has not approved the pernicious customs mentioned above. Certainly plural marriages, concubinage, and prostitution *have* been approved by large sections of human society. Even today this statement is true, though many people within these nations deplore them. The trouble is that where Christian standards of ethics are absent, the evil of men's hearts is ineradicable.

b. The second objection to the utilitarian theory is that it offers no motive sufficiently strong to induce men to work for the goal of the happiness of the human race. It has already been pointed out that men's ideas differ widely as to what will produce the greatest amount of happiness, as well as to what *is* the greatest good in itself. They differ not only about the goal toward which they are to strive but also about the methods to be used to reach the goal. The Soviet communists believe that revolution and coercive methods will establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The socialists believe that a communist society can be brought about peacefully through the vote.

But even if there were agreement both as to the goal and as to the methods, people will not sacrifice for the common good unless they believe that they and their children will share in the fruits of their labor. Doubtless collective farming would be more efficient than individual ownership, but these farms have failed in China and elsewhere

because the people will not work for others when they do not enjoy the full fruits of their own labor. They will not work hard unless the goal is to be realized in their own lifetime. And if that is the case, what they are really doing is *making their own welfare and happiness their aim in life!* The only way to get great numbers of people to work for the good of humanity is to have them abandon the utilitarian theory, or to persuade or coerce them to work by holding their own welfare as the great good toward which they should aim.

Let us not deceive ourselves at this point by thinking that large numbers of men in the past have worked for the good of society in general at the expense of their own happiness. In the first place, those who have done so, in addition to Christians, are relatively few. In the second place, the vast majority of those who have not been distinctly Christian have been raised either among Christian surroundings or under direct Christian training, and their ideals of life have been borrowed from the ethics of Christianity. Outside Christianity the number of those who have labored unselfishly for the good of the race without coming in contact with Christianity is very small, and who knows but that they hoped to realize their ideals in their own lifetime and so enjoy the fruits of their own labor? At any rate, aside from Christianity's influence we know from experience that few will devote their energy to the welfare of the race. The utilitarian theory is to be condemned on at least two counts: (1) there is no standard by which the happiness of the human race can be judged, and no way of setting a universal goal toward which to work; (2) there is no motive in the theory capable of getting enough individuals to work toward the goal, if one could be agreed upon, to realize the goal for the whole human race.

It will be seen from the foregoing that certain demands must be made of any ethical system before that system can be accepted as a workable one for the human race. First, there must be a fixed *goal* or *standard* of morality by which every act can be judged and either approved as right or condemned as wrong. Second, there must be a *motive* sufficiently strong to induce men to live by it according to the standard of the right. Third, the goal must be one which, if universally accepted and actually realized, *would work for the best interests* of the whole human race. The theory of hedonism breaks down at this third point. Utilitarianism has no fixed goal and no strong motive, but if it

could be realized in the betterment of the whole human race, it would be a good theory.

3. *Intuitionism*. Intuitionism holds that we have a standard of morality in our own minds, if we would only follow it. According to this theory every man possesses a standard of morality which will invariably tell him the right thing to do when he is confronted by any course of action involving a matter of right and wrong. The advocates of this theory usually hold that this standard agrees with that of the Bible, though others would say that it might be different. The plausibility of the theory finds its source in the fact that it is usually held by those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God and who are familiar with the ethical standards of the Bible. They thus unconsciously adopt the ethical standards of the Bible without realizing it and then think that the standard is within their own minds. The difficulty with this theory is that it confuses the *conscience*, which is the moral judging faculty of the mind coupled with the moral obligation to act according to the right when the right is discerned, with the *standard* by which the mind can measure any course of action. When any course of action presents itself, the mind, acting as conscience, passes a judgment of right or wrong upon it, but the standard by which the mind measures the act is the one which the mind has intellectually accepted as the right standard of ethics at some time in the past. If this standard is the code of ethics revealed in the Scriptures, then the mind estimates any course of action according to the Bible. If it is some other standard, the mind judges according to the standard accepted. The fact that the mind has no innate knowledge of the right and the wrong, common to all men, is clearly evident when we think of the different standards of ethics which have existed throughout the world. There would be only one standard of ethics if people knew intuitively the difference between right and wrong. The fact that there is as much agreement as there is in all ethical codes is probably due to the common revelation from God, possessed in the beginning by all men and handed down by tradition in all races. This original revelation of right and wrong—indeed, the conscience itself—has been corrupted by sin, so that the standard has changed and the conscience cannot make a true moral judgment unless aided by the Holy Spirit. This explains the agreement as well as the disagreement between the moral standards of the different countries and races of the world.

4. *Rationalism as the Ethical End in Life.* We have seen from the preceding sections that happiness either of the individual or of the race does not offer an adequate goal for ethics. We have also seen that the mind intuitively possesses no standard by which it can make moral judgments. The standard must therefore be something outside the mind. Among the goals that have been advocated at various times is the goal of *rationalism*. In the realm of ethics this term denotes the theory that man's chief end is the development of the mind or reason, and that a thing is right or wrong in proportion as it contributes toward this end. It is a much higher goal than hedonism because it recognizes the necessity of curbing the natural passions, but it is open to some of the same objections that were raised against hedonism. In the first place it offers no fixed goal as the standard by which to measure actions. Men's ideas may and do differ as to what will contribute to developing the human reason to its highest point. Some say that it can be developed only by the complete suppression of human passions, but the race would die out were this adopted as the universal goal and lived up to. (It may of course be said in reply that this would be a desirable result, but humanity will never be convinced that it is, because it contradicts the deepest instincts of the human race. The sexual instinct cannot be wholly bad or man would never be endowed with it. Any ethical system which does not find a place for the legitimate exercise of the natural instincts of mankind by that fact condemns itself and can never hope to be adopted by any large number of people.) Others will say that the mind is best developed by complete abstraction from the duties and responsibilities of life, in which case it becomes open to the charge of selfishness, our chief objection to hedonism. Still others will say that reason is to be developed best by the regulation and control of the instincts and a well-balanced mental growth amid the ordinary exercise of the human powers. At first sight this seems unobjectionable, but upon closer examination we see that the goal is still selfish and narrow. It makes the interests of self and the development of one's own intellect the highest end in life. Such a course naturally tends to neglect of all the duties of a citizen, and to the repression of all altruism. If logically followed, it would mean the annihilation of society.

Thus any ethical theory which places selfishness (in the bad sense of taking advantage of other people's needs or difficulties) first is self-condemned. In a good sense everyone is selfish to the extent of

wanting to make his own life happier. As long as he does not injure the legitimate interests of others, or seek to further his own ends at the expense of others, his selfishness is kept within the bounds of the law of God. The evil comes when he ruthlessly takes advantage of the misfortunes of others to feather his own nest, or when he breaks one of the last six commandments for his own personal benefit. If everyone acted according to such wrong self-seeking in his contacts with others, society would be disrupted.

On the other hand, any theory which places the interests of others above legitimate self-interests breaks down because of lack of an adequate motive to induce the individual to give up self-interest, and because there is no fixed goal toward which the individual can or will work. One of the basic weaknesses of socialism and communism is that they assume an individual or group of individuals or an impersonal state knows better what the citizens of the country need or should have than do the citizens themselves, and then seek to force their ideas upon the rest of the nation by law or police force. Any ethical system which will work or deserves to be successful must do three things: give a permanent standard or goal in harmony with God's laws; supply an adequate motive for all men; and, if realized, benefit all mankind.

B. Christian Ethics Alone Adequate

In our brief glance at the various chief religions of the world, it was shown incidentally that the ethical systems connected with the different religions were inferior to that of Christianity. We now wish to show that Christianity fulfills all the demands which must be made of any system which will work, and that the ethical system taught in the Bible is superior to any other system of ethics.

In the first place, the Bible offers itself as an external standard of ethics which is unchangeable. The code of ethics in the Bible claims to be a revelation of God's will for man. Than this there can be no higher standard if these claims are true. If it can be shown in the following chapters that God has spoken to men, and that the Bible is a book containing that written revelation, then the standard of ethics laid down in the Bible becomes ultimate and final.

In the second place, the Bible provides the motive power by which man's will can be directed to living up to the standard as far as possible, for any want of conformity to the standard is recognized as a sin, and

as a sin worthy of eternal punishment by God. This standard is briefly summarized in the Ten Commandments, as interpreted by Christ and the apostles. The motive power which brings men to obey these laws is the love for God which is planted in the heart of every Christian at conversion. If the conversion is real, based on the new birth, that love for the Triune God will be sincere and genuine and will show itself in a life which seeks to obey the commands of Christ. If the conversion is insincere, the Christian knows that he will receive eternal punishment for disobedience to the commands of God and for failure truly to trust in Christ for salvation. The Christian is saved by grace through faith, not because of his obedience to God's law, but if he is genuinely saved, he will show it by trying to obey God's law. He cannot trust in Christ sincerely without loving him, and he cannot love him without trying to do his will. We therefore see the practical nature of Christianity. It promises much, but it has the supreme motive of securing obedience to the law of God in wholehearted love for God and His Son our Saviour.

Moreover, Christianity comprehends all that is good in other systems of ethics. It offers eternal happiness to the believer and foretells eternal punishment to the one who refuses to believe. It demands, as a fruit of Christianity, love for our neighbors as ourselves, which will show itself in service for them, without interfering with their own rights and legitimate desires. It thus appropriates the best of utilitarianism. It commends the highest development of the reason, not for wrong selfish reasons, but so that the believer can serve God, humanity, and his own legitimate self-interests better thereby. But though these lesser ends find their place in Christianity, they are all subservient to the supreme motive, *the love for God* and the desire to please Him.

No other system avoids the pitfalls of sinful selfishness on one side and lack of adequate motive on the other, while at the same time offering the admirable results obtained through other systems of ethics as by-products of the Christian *life* itself.

Further, the Christian code of ethics commends itself to the reason when it is examined in detail. Where in other systems do we find such high demands in man's relation to his God as in the Bible? The Bible calls for exclusive worship of the Triune God. It demands the proper reverence and respect for the divine Persons of the Trinity, and it demands the proper service of the Godhead. Where in other systems do we find such strict requirements in regard to our relationship to other persons as in the Bible? In this system of ethics, as taught in the

Bible, the rights of private individuals in property are fully protected, while the duty of caring for the poor is laid upon all Christians. The sanctity of the home is fully protected, while sexual license is condemned in the severest terms. Truth, true humility which is not afraid to stoop to the lowest place in order to accomplish a great purpose, and a heart and life void of offense toward man and God are held up as the highest ideals of life. As the crowning virtue, love toward God and man is exalted as the all-important thing in life, without which all other things are as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals.

IV. GOD'S HAND

As we look at the system of ethics taught in the Bible and at the literary character of the Bible, can we escape the conclusion that we are gazing upon that which is holy? Could a system of ethics such as this, which so adequately meets every demand we may make upon it, have originated by man alone? Do we not see the mark of God's hand upon it? Can we escape the conclusion that the book which contains such remarkable literature and such a wonderful system of ethics is in a very real sense God's Book? We do not claim at this point that these things are conclusive proof that the Bible is the Word of God: we only claim that they are single stones in the great pyramid of proof which we are erecting to show that the Bible is the Word of God. Each stone is a bit of evidence in the whole pyramid of truth, but only when we look upon the finished whole will we see the complete design and realize the collective force of all the little stones we have put in place. If we look at each stone separately we may not appreciate the majesty of the whole. To some people these little stones of evidence will be far more persuasive than to others. The others will see nothing convincing in the separate points which we are making, and to them we must say that if they will be patient until the pyramid is finished, they will be better able to appreciate the collective force of the whole body of evidence taken together, and will feel with the rest of us that the Bible is indeed the Word of the Living God.

Appendix

For the first time in history, the communist countries are printing more copies of Marx and Lenin Bibles than are printed in non-communist lands, most being distributed free.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE¹

I. INTRODUCTION

The unity of the Bible is one of the most surprising and wonderful of all its characteristics. To appreciate fully this fact one must remember that it is not one book but a collection of sixty-six books written by more than forty different writers,² over a period of about fifteen centuries! Where in all literature would it be possible to collect even a half-dozen books from different ages, though one set out deliberately to find books upon the same subject, and expect to find them teaching the same topics in a similar way? Yet the Bible has such marvelous agreement both in theme and in subject matter that its component books can be spoken of collectively as one book—the Bible—confident that upon any issue none will teach anything which will contradict other portions of the other books. Surely there is something more than human in such a collection of books, displaying such unity. This will become even more evident as we proceed to examine this subject in detail.

II. UNITY OF THEME

The first point to be noted is the unity of theme throughout the Scriptures. The idea which unites this collection of books and welds them into one book is the idea of *redemption*. The Bible may be said to be the history of redemption. When a man sets out to write a history of any country or of any age, or, as was done by H. G. Wells in *The*

¹ Cf. A. Saphir, *The Divine Unity of Scripture*.

² While we speak of the "Psalms of David," and the "Proverbs of Solomon," actually the superscription of some chapters indicates that some of the chapters were written by other prophets.

Outline of History over forty years ago, to write the history of the world, he has some one key thought of all historical life which constitutes his interpretation of history. This central idea will shape all his writing either consciously or unconsciously. His facts will be selected with the idea in view, and everything which in any way contributes toward it will be included and emphasized, while the things which have no effect upon the main theme, important though they may be for other writers, will be omitted, or touched on very lightly. Now as we examine the Bible, we notice the same phenomenon. Though it is composed of many different kinds of literature, and though it was written by many different authors over a period of many hundred years, it is not a collection of books upon many different themes; there is only one theme running through the whole, and it is the idea of *redemption*, based upon the assumption of the sovereignty of God in nature and human history. The theme is the *redemption* of sinful man by the *sovereign God of grace*.

Let us see how this idea is traced through the different books. In Genesis we have first of all the account of the making of the world and man. Then comes the fall of man, necessitating his redemption and giving the promise of a redeemer in the seed of the woman, who would bruise the head of the serpent. For a space we see the progress of corruption and sin at work in the human race, that it may become clearly evident that without God's help no one can live a righteous life. This culminates in the great judgment upon the world at the time of the flood, when the whole human race was wiped out with the exception of Noah's family. There then follows another period of development without God's direct intervention, that it may become still clearer that, even with such a warning as the flood to look back upon, man will keep from obeying God unless God intervenes to create a "new heart and a right spirit" within him. With Abraham and Sarah we see the beginning of the process of redemption by grace promised in the third chapter of Genesis. The covenant promise is given to Abraham, and a race is separated from the rest of the world, so as to show that without the sovereign God's power redemption cannot be obtained, but that He has the power to bestow redemption upon whomsoever He chooses. This becomes apparent in the supernatural birth of Isaac to Sarah after Sarah had long passed the age of childbearing. Then begins the long history of the application of God's grace to His people, and the parallel

story of their rejection of God and of apostasy from Him that makes the history of Israel so sad. Through it all we see, standing out in sharp relief, God's *sovereign grace*.

With the beginning of the Mosaic period and the giving of the law another phase of the story is introduced. Man is now given an external standard by which to measure his righteousness, that it may become increasingly plain how impossible it is to earn one's own salvation by doing the works of the law. But at the same time, we see as if in letters of fire, the wonderful words *sovereign grace*! For though everyone broke the law every day of his life God *forgave*! Nevertheless it was not the pure uncaused forgiveness which the modern theological liberals attribute to God. The justice of God's nature must be satisfied as well as His love. So once a year the high priest went into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the lamb without blemish and without spot, to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat as a great symbol and type of him whom God was to send to make atonement for the sins of God's people once and for all! There was thus always before the people the great fact of God's sovereign grace, and the solemn symbol of the *cost* of redemption.

Many people wonder why such books as Ruth and Esther are included in the Bible, and what relation they have to the central theme, yet the purpose of their inclusion stands out so plainly that there seems no need to explain it. Both these beautiful stories give us a picture of the providence of the Sovereign God watching over His people even in exile and captivity. We see that God's grace is a wall of protection in poverty and prosperity, in honor and in disgrace, amid the scorn of strangers and the hatred of enemies, and that although it may seem that God has deserted His people at times, He nevertheless is always with them, working out His inscrutable purposes when they least expect it.

The Book of Job is given to us so that we may understand the purpose of suffering and learn to see God back of it all, controlling and permitting the suffering, the while He brings to pass His own plan of redemption even through the refining fires of pain.

In the Psalms redemption stands out too prominently to need to have our attention called to it. In the Song of Solomon we have in the symbol of human love the picture of God's love for His chosen people. In Ecclesiastes we see the vanity of life when lived for any other purpose than that of the glorification of God and the service of God and

our fellows. This book points us to God as the only end to be desired in life and makes God's redeeming grace a thing to be treasured and clung to. Proverbs is a textbook of practical piety, directing our footsteps in the way of righteousness, commending to us the good, and at the same time showing us the impossibility of keeping God's law in our own strength and thus making the necessity of redemption plain if we are to keep His law perfectly. We do not need to take up the latter prophets, as the books of the prophecies are called, for these books obviously center about redemption prophesied and promised. They are warnings against persistence in sin, prophecies of coming doom to those who reject the offer of salvation, and promises that, although they have sinned, God will at last forgive and send Israel's promised Redeemer, the long-looked-for Messiah. Malachi closes the Old Testament with the prophecy of the return of Elijah, which Christ interpreted as referring to John the Baptist. Then, after four hundred years, the Gospels take up the thread in the account of the birth of John the Baptist, which was the fulfillment of the Malachi prophecy.

In the New Testament nothing could be clearer than that the theme is redemption by the Sovereign God. Why are one quarter of the chapters in the four Gospels devoted to the last week of Christ's earthly life? Simply because the supreme purpose of Christ's life on earth was not to teach or to give men an example of true moral, sinless living, or to win men back to their allegiance to God by loving persuasion and by self-sacrifice, or even, supremely, to reveal God to men. The supreme end for which he came to earth was to give his life "a ransom for many"! The sacrifice on Calvary was not his misfortune but his achievement! Far from being, as one author put it, an example of what God is doing for us all the time, of living and dying with and in us, this act of Christ's was the supreme event toward which the whole creation pointed, and back to which all glory looks. It was the reason He gave up the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity, and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."³ If we miss this fact about the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, we leave His life an unexplained mystery, and Christianity is suspended in the air, a great effect without an adequate cause! The Acts and the Epistles are absolutely full of redemption, and whether we accept the fact of redemption as true or not, we must admit that the church was founded on the belief that redemption was a reality. Those who deny

³ Philippians 2:8.

that it was a reality must give an adequate explanation of the origin of this belief in the Christian Church and in the minds of the writers of the Epistles.

The Bible closes with a book which pictures the consummation of the whole redemptive process. The Book of the Revelation is nothing but a wonderful picture of the final application of God's redeeming grace to His chosen people, a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and tongues. The Bible begins with the story of how man came to need redemption and closes with the complete restoration of man to the status from which he fell and in addition bestows upon him the gift of eternal life, which Adam failed to earn, and which Christ purchased with his sinless life on earth and his lifeblood shed for us on Calvary. In regard to its main theme, the Bible is a unity.

III. UNITY OF STRUCTURE

The second point in connection with the unity of the Bible is the remarkable unity of structure of the Bible throughout. There is no book or part of a book which does not have its place in the complete whole. It would be impossible to cut out any section or book without irreparable damage to the whole. At the present time many church members and even ministers of the Christian Church think that the Old Testament could be discarded entirely by the church as a book outgrown and out of date. One of the reasons is that it is thought to represent teachings which the later church outgrew as it developed its religion, so that there is conflict between the teachings of the Old and New Testaments. This point will be considered in a later section, but at present we wish to emphasize the impossibility of doing such a thing from the point of view of the structure alone. It would be absolutely impossible to understand and interpret the New Testament without the aid of the Old. There are 181 quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament.⁴ And in this list of quotations are passages from all the disputed portions of the Old Testament! Furthermore, aside from the direct quotations which are found in the New Testament, there are innumerable references to the Old Testament's characters and events and an incorporation of ideas which can be understood only by reference to the Old Testament. For example, how

⁴ Horne, *Introduction to the Scriptures*.

could the Passover be understood without knowledge of the Exodus from Egypt? Or for that matter how could the Jewish nation itself be understood unless we had its history in the Old Testament? Over and over again throughout the history of the Apostolic Church we find reference to constant study of the Old Testament Scriptures. Indeed, the genesis of the church itself at Pentecost could not possibly be accounted for unless we had the Old Testament to explain the prophecies which are said to be fulfilled. The whole Book of Matthew and to a lesser extent all the other Gospels are simply full of instances in which the Scripture was fulfilled. What is the Scripture and how is it fulfilled? The only way we can know is by reference to the Old Testament. It is impossible to separate the two Testaments without mutilation of the whole. A root cannot spring out of the dry ground, and unless we ground the New Testament in the Old, we leave the whole argument of the New Testament and the whole movement of Christianity itself unexplained.

Then notice the way certain chapters of the Bible give us a complete exposition of some subject which is mentioned only incidentally in other portions of the Scriptures. For instance, the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians gives us the only complete treatment of love in the Bible. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives us the only complete treatment of faith. The eighth and ninth chapters of Proverbs give us a complete dissertation on wisdom. The third chapter of the Epistle of James gives us the only full treatment of the tongue. As we take up the Epistles as a whole, we find that, while they all correlate their teachings on different doctrines, each has its particular place in the whole group of Epistles. There is no unnecessary overlapping in their teaching even on the same themes, but each gives a different angle to the doctrines which is necessary to full understanding of the doctrines themselves. In its structure the Bible is a unit, each part interlaced with and interpreted by the other parts, so that every part is necessary to a complete understanding of the whole.

IV. UNITY OF TEACHING

The next point is its unity of teaching. The wonderful thing about this is the fact that we are considering the work not of one author or even of two, but of more than *forty*! And these forty were not contemporaries but were scattered over a period of fifteen centuries. Moreover,

they were not all men of one class and education. In the list of authors we find university-trained men like Moses and Paul, and humble fishermen like Peter; diplomats and kings; shepherds and priests; tax collectors and physicians; countrymen and city dwellers—in fact, men from almost every rank of society, with all kinds of training and lack of schooling. In all the history of literature it would be hard to find a more heterogeneous collection of authors. Yet though these men were so different from each other, and though they lived at different periods of the world's history, their teachings, as found in the books they wrote, are in substantial agreement and when compared and arranged in systematic form are found to be complementary and not contradictory! Of course many people deny that there is this agreement in teaching, and on some points the question is disputed even today, but the remarkable thing is that there is room for dispute after twenty centuries. If contradictions could be clearly proved, the matter would have been settled centuries ago, and there would no longer be room for dispute.

Let us mention only a few points in this connection to establish our case.

A. Prophecies

Canon Liddon is authority for the statement that there are in the Old Testament 332 distinct predictions which were literally fulfilled in Christ. The mathematical probability that these would all be fulfilled would be represented by a fraction having one for the numerator and eighty-four followed by ninety-seven ciphers as the denominator! This fulfillment of prophecy in general is one of the strongest proofs that the Bible is the Word of God, and will be discussed fully in a later chapter, but at present we wish to point out the fact that these prophecies are not contradictory. Things which in the Old Testament dispensation may have seemed to be contradictory are seen as history unfolds to be merely references to separate events. For example, as the prophets looked forward into time they saw the future events without any sense of perspective, so that those which were really centuries apart in time are often mentioned in the same paragraph. The two comings of Christ were inextricably tangled in Old Testament prophecy. Only the fulfillment of the events at the time of the first coming of Christ enables us to separate the two elements of prophecy. But notice particularly that in examining the writings of the different prophets we

do not find contradictions between them. If it were only one person composing the messages and giving them to different individuals to put into their own language there could not be greater agreement than there actually is. There is every evidence even in the wording of the prophecies themselves, to say nothing of their fulfillment, to indicate that one Master Mind inspired the words which each prophet expresses in his own language.

B. *Ethics*

We have already discussed at some length the ethical standards of the Bible in comparison to other ethical standards, but we wish to point out now that there is no change or development in the different periods of Biblical history, and that the different authors agree among themselves as to the character of these ethical standards. Let us take the Ten Commandments as an illustration. Nowhere in the Bible is approval expressed of actions contrary to these commandments, the fundamental laws of Biblical ethics. Contrary actions are often recorded, but never with approbation. Israel is constantly enjoined to keep the Law of Moses, while the ritualism of the Law was merely based on the application of the Ten Commandments to the practical conditions under which the people were living. Modern theologians are in the habit of exalting the Sermon on the Mount as the sum total of Christian ethics, and we would not minimize its importance and value a single iota, yet the Sermon on the Mount was only bringing to the attention of the world what was implicit in the Ten Commandments themselves. The Bible is a unit in regard to ethical teachings.

C. *The Idea of God*

It is the fashion for modern liberal theologians to belittle the idea of God found in the Old Testament, and to represent that given in the New Testament as far superior to it. For example, in a sermon published many years ago, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick referred to the Ark of the Covenant as though the Hebrews believed in a "god in a box,"⁵ a tribal god whom they could carry around with them and compel to do their bidding by magical incantations! Statements such as this betray either the ignorance of the writer or his willful misinterpretation of the facts of the Old Testament, for the evidence to the contrary is too overwhelming to need detailed citation. To mention

⁵ Harry Emerson Fosdick in a printed sermon.

only one example, let us take the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, I Kings 8:22-53. It is there stated that Solomon spread out his hands to heaven as he prayed. To quote only one verse which shows that his idea of God was as modern as our own: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (v. 27). Certainly nothing else is needed to refute the thought that the idea of God in the Old Testament is inferior to that in the New Testament. But if more were needed we could quote verse after verse throughout the Old Testament in support of the unity of teaching in regard to God.⁶

Another charge frequently made is that the God of the Old Testament is a god of cruelty and revenge while the God of the New Testament is a God of *love*. If there is any truth at all in the charge it is in the fact that the emphasis in the New Testament is more on God's mercy, while in the Old Testament it is on His justice. However, even this admission can hardly be made, for where in the whole Bible can we find the love of God better expressed than in the history of Israel, when Israel rebelled against God again and again, yet God forgave His people over and over? God is represented as yearning over His people Israel, yet Israel would not follow Him or obey Him. The punishment came only after centuries of forbearance and of withholding of God's wrath that they might have ample time to repent.

The commands of God to the Israelites to exterminate the people of Palestine when they entered the Promised Land are the particular targets for the opprobrium of such liberals in attempting to show that the God of the Old Testament is a God of cruelty and revenge. There are two things to remember, however. First, even in dealing with those wicked nations God was long-suffering and patient; for over four hundred years after God had promised the land to Abraham He allowed the Amorites to continue in their wickedness in the land of Palestine. They had ample opportunity to repent. He did not destroy them at once, "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full," God told Abraham. In the second place we cannot fully realize the horrible wickedness of those nations.⁷ In the trial of Eichmann, the Nazi who murdered six million Jews or supervised their murder, it was brought out that he was carrying out the orders of Hitler but also was himself

⁶ II Chronicles 2:6; Psalm 139:3-10; Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Exodus 20:24; Deuteronomy 4:34-39; Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 32:18-19; Jonah 1:3-4; etc.

⁷ See Jeremiah 19:5, and Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, pp. 146-147.

guilty of ordering the extermination of the Jews. As one reads of the horrors of the gas chambers and the murder of countless little children, can anyone say that such murderers do not deserve the severest penalties of the law? The inhabitants of Palestine were unspeakably evil. They burned their infants in the red-hot arms of their gods.⁸ The city of Bashan was the site of the lewd worship of Astarte.⁹ Sodom and Gomorrah were so wicked that God destroyed them, and archaeology has discovered that each household had to be protected from others by massive doors or gates."¹⁰ Baal worship was conducted through horrible sex orgies. The "high places" had chambers for both male and female prostitutes.¹¹ Such wickedness deserved to be exterminated.

When we compare the teaching of the New Testament with that of the Old, where in the Old Testament can we find anything that equals the terrible words of Christ as he pronounced the doom of the cities which had rejected him? Or where in the Old Testament is there anything in the way of cruelty to equal the terrible pictures of wrath poured out on the earth that we find in the Book of the Revelation? The God of the New Testament is a "consuming fire"¹² as well as a God of love, and the God of the Old Testament is a God of love as well as a God of wrath against unrepentant sinners. The Bible is a unit in its idea of God.

D. *Christ and Paul*

Modernists are in the habit of charging that the doctrines of Paul were different from the doctrines which Jesus Christ taught while He was on earth, and that modern orthodoxy is based on the theology of Paul rather than the religion of Christ. Of course the thing that is usually objected to is the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ. Many liberals would admit that it is found in the teaching of Paul, but they say that Paul's theology was simply the way Paul clothed his religious experience in philosophical language and is not at all binding on us today. They say that we must discard the outgrown husk of theological speculation and penetrate to the "abiding religious experiences" of Paul and Jesus.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 98.

¹⁰ J. P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, p. 62.

¹¹ *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 413.

¹² Hebrews 12:29.

Now the only way such an antagonism between the theology of Paul and the religion of Jesus can be set up is to delete from the Gospels all passages referring to Christ's mission as Redeemer, and to do this for no other reason than that they teach doctrines which are distasteful to the modernists. There is just as good textual evidence for the ransom passage in Matthew 20:28 as there is for the Sermon on the Mount, and no more reason for rejecting one than the other, since both are integral parts of the Book of Matthew. If we examine the teachings of Christ as they are, without first eliminating passages which are objectionable to the advocates of this view, we find the germs of all the doctrines which Paul afterward developed at great length. We have already referred to the Atonement passage in Matthew 20:28, but that is by no means the only place where a similar doctrine is expressed in Christ's own words. Christ teaches his own preëxistence in the words "Before Abraham was I am."¹³ Christ's deity is explicitly declared in the Gospels and implicitly expressed again and again.¹⁴ We find the Second Coming of Christ taught in Matthew 24, and the doctrines of heaven, hell, eternal punishment for unrepentant sinners who reject Christ—in fact all the doctrines which Paul at greater length developed so clearly and forcefully—in germ at least in the teachings of Christ Himself.¹⁵ It is impossible, by fair treatment, to establish any conflict between the theology of Paul and the teaching of Jesus. Paul's theology was the theology Jesus taught, and the religious background of Paul's teaching was based on the teaching of Jesus himself as recorded in the Gospels.

E. Paul and James

It is likewise claimed that in their teaching about faith and works Paul and James were at variance with each other. However, when we examine their precepts on these subjects, we find that Paul never taught that we could be saved no matter how we live,¹⁶ and that James never taught that we could be saved without faith.¹⁷ Paul emphasized the

¹³ John 8:58.

¹⁴ Matthew 1:23; 8:29; 9:6; 22:43-45; 28:17; Mark 5:7; Luke 33:34; 22:7; John 1:1, 2; 5:18, 22, 23; 10:30, 33; 20:28.

¹⁵ Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 9:26; 21:27-36; John 14:3, 18; Matthew 10:32-33; 12:50; 8:12; 10:28; Luke 3:17; 16:23-26; Matthew 10:28; 18:8; 25:41; Luke 3:17; John 5:29.

¹⁶ Colossians 3:12-17; Romans 6:1-11; II Thessalonians 2:17; II Timothy 2:21; Titus 2:14.

¹⁷ James 2:18-26; 5:15.

fact that we cannot be saved unless we believe, no matter how we live, and James emphasized the fact that no matter how well we may say believe, if our lives do not reflect the doctrine we profess, we have a dead faith, not one which will bring salvation to us. Thus when examined sympathetically, the two approaches to the subject of salvation reveal no contradiction whatever.

F. *Doctrines*

We cannot stress sufficiently the fact that amid all the intricacies of doctrines such as the Atonement and the Trinity, where men since the time of the New Testament have so often gone astray, all the Scriptures avoid these pitfalls and teach only the things which harmonize with one another in regard to the doctrines. This is nothing less than marvelous, for today it is almost impossible to find even two writers who agree with each other on these subjects in every respect. We can only conclude that agreement of the different writers in the Scriptures on these issues points directly to God who through the Holy Spirit guided and controlled them in such a way that they wrote only the truth which He wanted expressed.

V. UNITY OF SYMBOLISM

One of the most remarkable points in connection with the Bible is the unity of symbolism throughout the Scriptures. Fire, for example, is the universal symbol of purification and punishment, and wherever it is used throughout the Bible it has one of these two meanings. Water is the symbol of purification, as in baptism or in the cleansing of Naaman the leper. It usually has reference to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit cleansing the heart of sin. In John 3:5, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," water cannot be the water of baptism¹⁸ for (a) it is here stated that it is *necessary for salvation*, whereas the thief on the cross was saved but not baptized. (b) This water *actually regenerates* the one who receives it, while water baptism does not save, as witnessed by the example of Simon Magus in Acts 8:13, 23. Clearly, therefore, this water is the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, probably through the Word of God.¹⁹

¹⁸ George Hutcheson, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, p. 42.

¹⁹ Cf. Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; Ezekiel 36:25.

Oil is the regular symbol of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in some of his activities. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil to show that they were to be especially endowed with the Holy Spirit for their particular office, while Christ is referred to as preëminently the "anointed one." Leaven is almost universally the symbol of corruption. For this reason leaven was excluded from Hebrew homes, according to the Mosaic Law, at the time of the Passover, to symbolize the exclusion of evil from their homes and hearts. Christ warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, referring to their hypocrisy and pride. Paul likewise uses leaven as a symbol of corruption. The only place in the Bible where the word is used with no reference to corruption is in the parable of the leaven, where it is said that the kingdom of heaven spreads like leaven. Since the kingdom of heaven cannot be evil it cannot be used symbolically in this place but is probably merely a figure of speech denoting the pervasive power of the kingdom's activity in society.

Blood is the symbol of life poured out. The physical blood of Christ does not save us: it is the *life* yielded up and poured out for sinners that saves us. Incense is symbolical of the offering up of the prayers of the saints to God. Wormwood is the symbol of bitterness; the balance, of scarcity; and the wine press, of judgment.

Symbolism is further carried out in the use of numbers throughout the Bible. One is the symbol of unity; two, of growth; three, of the Trinity; four, of the world; six, of weakness; seven and a thousand, of perfection and completion; twelve, of the union of the human and the divine.

VI. UNITY OF LITERARY EMPHASIS

Throughout the Bible we likewise find a unity in the emphasis which is placed on important subjects. Notice, for example, the disproportionate space occupied in the Gospels by the events of the last week of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. About one-fourth of the four Gospels is concerned with the incidents leading up to and including the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. Notice the way in which the death of Christ, his resurrection, his ascension, his Second Coming, his deity and continuing presence through the Holy Spirit are referred to again and again, with always the same estimate of their importance. Things which one author rates as most important

receive similar emphasis in all the other books. Consequently, the first time a subject is mentioned in the Bible, if it is emphasized strongly we may be sure that wherever else it appears it will receive the same strong emphasis. Take for example Abraham's trust in God. The first time this is mentioned is in Genesis 15:6: "And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." It is Abraham's trust in God that is the means of his reconciliation with God. Wherever the same subject is afterward mentioned, it always has this emphasis, and it is always the trust of Abraham that stands out in prominence.

VII. CONCLUSION

All these points give us a remarkable testimony as to the *real* unity of authorship of the Bible. It is peculiarly *God's* Word, and though there are over forty different writers, the Holy Spirit is peculiarly the Inspirer of them all. We do not mean that God used the individuals as automata, or that He always dictated what they should say. We mean that *the Holy Spirit so guided and controlled the writers that what they wrote was true, and was the particular truth God wanted to be given in writing to His people.* God allowed the writers to use their own intellects, their own language, and their own style, but when they wrote, the Holy Spirit supernaturally kept their writing free from all error and rendered it the exact truth which God wanted conveyed to His people down through the ages. The Bible thus becomes a unit, parts of which cannot be cut off without irreparable injury to the whole. There is a certain growth in clarity of teaching throughout the Bible, and in one sense a progression in the giving of the revelation in the Bible, but later and more complete revelation never contradicts the previous revelation: it simply adds to it new thoughts and facts. As revelation progressed, that which had been implicit became explicit, and that which had been obscure became plain. The modernist's idea that the Bible represents the progression from wrong ideas about God and religion, the world and life, to right ideas about these things is totally wrong. The revelation of God in Genesis is just as true though not as complete as that in the Gospel of John or the Epistle to the Romans. It is the unity of the Bible in all these things that gives us one of the strongest proofs that it is the *Word of God*.

CHAPTER X

THE HISTORICAL TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE BIBLE: THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

No matter how many other fine qualities a book may have, if it lacks historical accuracy when it claims to record history, it is untrustworthy as a guide where it cannot be tested by external evidence. We might applaud the Bible as literature, admire its style and diction, wonder at its unity, and be awed by the majesty of its theme and ideas, but if it could be shown to be historically inaccurate, it could never be followed as an infallible guide for faith and practice, nor could it be considered as a book written under the direction and control of the Holy Spirit. If there is any one quality which, more than all others, we should expect to find in the nature of God, it is the attribute of truth, and if this were lacking in a book claiming to be the product of divine supervision and influence, we could never accept it as a book actually written under the control of the Holy Spirit. Nor can it be replied that the original documents were inspired and true but that errors have crept into the text we now have, transmitted by copyists down the ages to the present documents. A few minor errors of that nature could be excused, but if the Bible contained many such, and there were no way of telling where they were, doubt of the whole Bible would be inevitable. The few errors of transmission, which in no way affect the truth and fundamental accuracy of the documents as a whole, can be largely eliminated, for historical and textual criticism have worked out the laws under which this kind of error occurs. But if the errors were so numerous as to throw in doubt the accuracy of the whole, how could we accept it as a guide to history or religious truth?

We thus see the vital importance of the question of the historical trustworthiness of the Bible. It claims to be historical. It claims to be a record of what has actually happened in the past. It is, as we have previously stated, the *history of redemption by the Sovereign God*. As a historical book it must be put to the same tests as other historical books. Any book which cannot meet satisfactorily these scientific tests becomes in just that proportion discredited as a record of actual events and, in the case of the Bible, becomes discredited as a teacher of revealed religious truth. A book may be historically accurate and not be inspired, but no book can be accepted as inspired which is found to be historically inaccurate.

We have already quoted Dr. Nelson Glueck, the famous archaeologist, as declaring that "no archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture."¹ That assertion, on such reputable authority, raises the presumption that the evidence to be examined will support the view that the Bible is historically accurate.

II. THE HISTORICITY OF THE BIBLE NOT CONTRADICTED BY SCIENCE

In discussing this question we must distinguish between proved and tested scientific discoveries and hypotheses or theories which, however plausible, fall short of proved scientific facts. For example, the fact that objects attract each other according to the law of gravitation would seem to be a discovered fact. The *interpretation* of facts falls into the category of theory. Someone has well stated that it is the duty of science to observe, tabulate, and draw proper inferences from observed *facts*, but when it ventures into the realm of cause back of the facts, and begins to theorize about those inferences, it has no right to demand that we accept its theories as *proved facts*. We are now on the verge of discoveries regarding the space outside the earth's atmosphere. We read many theories about the possibility of life on other planets in the galaxies. If we were to accept as true all the statements made by some astronomers about such matters we could easily come to the conclusion that it had been scientifically proved that other planets in the universe are inhabited. A little sober thought should convince us that such matters are entirely in the area of unproved hypotheses.

Now when we say that the historicity of the Bible is not contradicted

¹ *New York Times*, October 28, 1956.

by the proved facts of science, we mean just that. Scientific theories are often at variance with the Bible. Sometimes it is the fault of those who exegete the Bible wrongly, as was the case when the theologians of the day opposed the Copernican theory because it contradicted their understanding of the Bible. At other times it is the theory of science that is at fault, and opposition to the Bible is assumed until a better scientific theory displaces the one thought to be opposed. Both theologians and some scientists are constantly assuming that the Bible teaches a particular scientific theory when in fact the Bible neither supports nor contradicts the theory in question. The Bible is not a *textbook of science* but the history of redemption. The language used in the Bible is that of the people of the time, and phenomenal terms are used in place of scientific terminology. The facts of nature were mentioned only incidentally and in language that was understood by the people of that time.

There are certain points, however, where the Bible comes into direct conflict with a certain class of pseudo-scientific theories. When unbelieving scientific men begin to theorize about philosophy and religion and under the name of science set forth hypotheses about the universe that leave God out, they of course easily come into conflict with the Bible. For example, any theory of evolution which attempts to account for the universe without God at once differs with the Bible, which teaches that God was the creator of the universe. Theories change constantly, and though they may seem to clash with the Bible at any given time, eventually they will probably change, while the God of the Bible is the same yesterday, today, and forever. At the present time we can assert without fear of contradiction that there is no proved scientific fact that is in real contradiction with the Bible on any fair interpretation of the Biblical text.

III. THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

We are ready now to proceed with the main task of this chapter, the exploration of the thesis that the history recorded in the Bible has never been proved to be inaccurate. At the outset we must insist on fair treatment for the Bible text. It is a universal rule that anyone who challenges the historicity of any document long accepted as true must accept the burden of proving his contention. The Bible is a group of documents that have been accepted as true during the whole history

of the Jewish race since the time when the documents are alleged to have been written. Taken at their face value they have been the sacred books of two related religions for over three millenniums. They bear no open marks of forgery and, as has been shown, are not in conflict with known scientific facts. The burden of proving them false rests entirely upon those who challenge their historicity. The fact that the theme of these books deals with the eternal salvation of men, the most important theme a book could discuss, is no valid reason for rejecting the evidence of the Bible upon the historical points it includes. Nor is the fact that the Bible contains accounts of miracles and prophecies which appear to contradict the uniformity of nature sufficient to discredit the document containing such things, unless it can be proved that miracles and prophecies are impossible. If God exists, no man can logically deny the possibility of His intervening in nature to perform a miracle. The question of the existence of God is, as has been shown in Chapter V, a prior question which must be discussed by those who deny miracles before they can assert their impossibility. As indicated in Chapter III, the belief in a personal God is the only one which offers an adequate explanation of the facts of the universe, and for a person who admits the truth of theism to deny the possibility of God's intervening in nature to work a miracle is a logical absurdity. There can therefore be no valid objection to the Bible because it contains accounts of miracles and prophecies.

Nevertheless, those who attack the historicity of the Bible usually assume that the Bible is false unless it can be shown to be true by external evidence. Any other historical document, if it can be tested at two or three points, is universally accepted as true until contrary evidence comes to light. All we are demanding for the Bible is that it be treated with the same degree of fairness that any other historical document would receive. If we can show that the Bible is historically accurate in those places where we can test it by external evidence, we claim the right to assume its accuracy in those places where external evidence is lacking one way or the other, until evidence proving its inaccuracy is discovered. The mere assertion of a theological professor, unsupported by evidence, is not sufficient ground for rejecting any document, much less the most important group of documents in the world, the Bible.

It is of course impossible within the compass of a few pages to take up all the points where the historicity of the Old Testament has been

challenged, and show all the evidence that has come to light on the subject. That would be the task of volumes. Nor is it necessary to do so. A few typical instances of the way archaeology has revealed evidence on disputed points in the Bible will be sufficient to establish our case. Remarkably enough, such a mass of data supporting the historicity of the Bible has been found that we are embarrassed by its very profusion. When the first edition of this book appeared in 1927, M. G. Kyle's books *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments* and *Moses and the Monuments* were the best available in English on this subject. Since that time expedition after expedition has uncovered astounding archaeological evidence, and, as Dr. Nelson Glueck says, none of it contradicts or controverts the historical statements of the Bible! One should read books like *The Bible as History*, by Werner Keller, *Archaeology and Bible History*, by Joseph P. Free, and *Archaeology*, by J. A. Thompson really to appreciate the wealth of archaeological proof of the historicity of the Bible.

A. Topographical and Geographical Trustworthiness of the Bible

It has come to light through excavations, from the monuments, and from geographical research that the peoples, places, and events mentioned in Scripture are found in the exact localities and under the exact geographical circumstances described in the Bible. The Scripture passages are the exact representations of the reality, not clumsy attempts to reconstruct the setting many years after the events, at a place far from them, and with no accurate sources from which to draw, as the critics would have us believe. Correctness concerning the site of an event is the most important mark of a true happening, as Kyle states. When the excavations in Palestine, Egypt, and Babylonia have so marvelously supported the accuracy of the Bible in its geographical references it is difficult to see how the critics can still challenge its accuracy in other respects. Keller relates that travelers need no other guidebook than the Bible when following down the coast of the Red Sea, along the line of the Exodus, where the whole topography exactly corresponds to that mentioned in the Bible.² City after city in Palestine and other lands, long buried under mounds of centuries, have been located by excavations and the places and circumstances surrounding many Bible citations exactly corroborated.

² W. F. Albright, quoted by Werner Keller in *The Bible as History*, p. 109.

B. The Ethnological Correctness of Scripture

It is a fact well established by archaeological research that wherever any peoples are mentioned in the Scripture, or any statement is made about their kinship, origin, customs, whether they rule over others or serve other nations—or any other fact about them whatsoever—these statements can be depended upon to be in exact accordance with the facts as revealed by archaeology. The tenth chapter of Genesis contains the list of the lands peopled by the different branches of the family of Noah. A number of remarkable allegations are found in this chapter. “Babylonia, a great stronghold of Semitism, is represented as originally founded by the non-Semitic people of Cush, whom archaeology has identified also as non-Semitic and given to them the name of Sumerians, or Accadians. . . . Out of this non-Semitic Babylonia, the Bible says, ‘went forth Asshur and builded Nineveh.’ . . . Thus the Assyrian civilization, so distinctly Semitic, is said to have come out of the non-Semitic civilization of Babylonia. But archaeology of those lands confirms the statement.”³ This chapter also says, as Kyle points out, that the original civilization of Canaan was Hamitic, whereas history in later times shows Canaan to be unmistakably Semitic, with a Semitic language. The excavation of Gezer has disclosed the fact that the earliest remains of the city were distinctly not Semitic! Now what chance would a man writing in 500 B.C., with none of the knowledge of archaeology which we have today, and with no historical sources dating from the earliest times before him, composing history as a novelist composes fiction, basing his statements only on vague tradition, or on his own observations—what chance would such a man have of making an accurate guess at obscure matters like those mentioned above? The only theory that a historian can hold in the face of such facts is that the author of the table of nations in Genesis 10 must have had original sources of the first rank before him when he was writing these words.

C. The Confirmation of the Old Testament System of Chronology

When we say that the Bible system of chronology has been confirmed, we do not mean that we can state the exact astronomical year when the events mentioned in the Old Testament happened. That phase of the subject is still shrouded in mystery.

³ M. G. Kyle, *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments*, p. 52.

The one thing certainly and definitely known about ancient oriental chronology is that it was lacking in the mathematical definiteness of present day annals. . . . While this is true and the Bible chronology is not fully understood, yet, at the same time it has been vindicated as a real system of chronology in which the period to which the events referred is correct, the order of events is the order in which they occurred, and the play and counter-play of influences are correctly timed and arranged. In this vindication, Egyptian explorations have an important part. It must be kept in mind also that the Assyrian chronology vindicates the Biblical system. The Egyptian and Assyrian testimony are by two equal and independent witnesses. Each strengthens the other and yet each is complete and satisfactory in itself.⁴

The aim of exegesis is to ascertain what the original writers wished their readers to understand as they wrote. If, as we know to be a fact, the people to whom the Old Testament was originally addressed cared little or nothing about exact dates, used round numbers in reckoning, and were accustomed to overlapping reigns of kings and to telescoping genealogies as an aid to memory, then it cannot be urged as an argument against the historicity of the documents containing such things that there is no mathematical astronomical chronology in the Bible. Whatever the system of chronology was, the people to whom it was written understood it perfectly, and our ignorance of its exact nature cannot be used against the historicity of the Bible documents. With all its indefiniteness, the astonishing fact remains that when we compare the events in Egypt as recorded on the tombs and monuments, and the corresponding events in Babylonia and Assyria, with the interwoven events recorded in the Scriptures, we find that the different parts of the chronology fit perfectly. "We find that Josiah is side by side with Pharaoh Necho, as the Bible places him; Hezekiah with Tirhaka; and Rehoboam with Shishak."⁵

Thus the critics generally are forced to admit that the first elements of trustworthy history are found in the Bible documents. The places where the events are said to happen are accurately located; the people who are said to be in such and such localities were actually there; and the time of the events recorded is the exact time when they must have happened. This furnishes the framework for the whole of Old Testament history. Without such a framework there could be no trustworthy

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

history in the Old Testament. Let us now fill in the framework at various places and see whether the history itself rings true.

In building a large office building, sometimes it is important to discover just what kind of rock lies beneath the surface of the site. It is not necessary to excavate the whole site in order to know what lies below the surface. If borings are made at different places, the underlying rock can be as accurately determined as though the whole were excavated. In exactly the same way it is not necessary to confirm every portion of history recorded in a document before accepting the document as genuine and trustworthy. It is sufficient to confirm its trustworthiness at a few places at random throughout the document, and to be able to show that, wherever its depths are tested, the quality of the history is the same throughout.

IV. CONFIRMATION OF VARIOUS ITEMS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

As we compare the discoveries of archaeology with the pages of Biblical history the most convincing evidence of the trustworthiness of the Bible is found in individual items. As we have shown, the framework of reliable history becomes clear as we study the evidence, but surprisingly, confirmation comes from the little, often obscure points that a forger would not go to the trouble of faking.

A. *Abraham*

"The documents from the kingdom of Mari produce startling proof again that the stories of the patriarchs in the Bible are not pious legends, as is often too readily assumed, but events that are described as happening in a historical period that can be precisely dated."⁶ The kingdom of Mari was north of the Euphrates, in the upper part of what is now Syria and northwest of Iraq. From 1933 to 1939 excavations uncovered the most remarkable palace of antiquity. It covered almost ten acres.⁷ A library of 23,600 documents was discovered.⁸ "Abraham must . . . have lived about 1900 B.C. The finds at Mari confirm the accuracy of the Biblical account."⁹ Abraham lived in Haran, in the kingdom of Mari. A true story by an Egyptian, Sinuhe, who spent most of his life

⁶ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

in Palestine, confirms the description of Canaan given in the Bible (Deut. 8:7).¹⁰ The clothing of the period consisted of highly colored striped material, much like the coat of many colors which Jacob gave to Joseph (Gen. 37:3).¹¹

B. Chedorlaomer's Campaign Against Sodom (Gen. 14)

The critics of the latter part of the nineteenth century were almost unanimous in holding that the fourteenth chapter of Genesis was un-historical. It was charged that (1) the names of the kings were fictitious; (2) the idea that the king of Babylonia served the king of Elam was historically impossible; (3) the idea that Palestine was at that early time under the control of the eastern empires was impossible; (4) a warlike expedition of this character could not have been made across the Arabian Desert; (5) most of all, granting that all the rest of the narrative was historical, the idea that a band of nomads such as Abram's followers are said to have been could defeat the united armies of four powerful kings, recapture the prisoners, and escape unpunished was too absurd even to be considered. But notice what archaeology has discovered.

An inscription on the monuments shows that there was actually a rebellion in Palestine at this time against the ruling eastern empires, and that the kings of the East under the leadership of Elam sent a great expedition to subdue it. "Shinar corresponds to Babylonia (Dan. 1:2; Isa. 11:11; Zech. 5:11). . . . Eriaku, king of Larsa, may have been Arioch, Chedorlaomer—Kudurlagamar—means 'Servant of Lagamar,' an Elamite god. Tidal, king of nations, has been identified as Tudhul, king of Gutium, located northeast of Babylonia."¹² The Zuzim were kin to the Rephaim, who were gigantic in stature (Deut. 2:11, 20). Though Melchizedek has not been identified, the kings of Jerusalem shortly after this time were referred to by a unique title which was always used when their names were mentioned: "It was not my father and it was not my mother who established me in this position, but it was the mighty arm of the king himself who made me master of the lands and possessions of my father."¹³

As to the incident here recorded of the rescue made by Abraham, no

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹² *Holy Bible*, the Berkeley Version, p. 11.

¹³ Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

mention of it has been discovered on the monuments for the good reason that kings were never in the habit of recording defeats on their monuments, and after all the rescue was only a minor incident in a great campaign. The First World War saw many similar incidents, when small bodies of men defeated a large force by night, through surprise and strategy, so there is nothing at all astonishing about the details of the rescue. It was only a relatively small rear-guard action, involving the rescue of a few petty captives, and the mighty expedition of the eastern kings would not turn back for such a small matter after they had established the king's authority over the whole vast region of Palestine. Ellasar is probably Larsa, on the Euphrates. The vale of Siddim¹⁴ is at the southern end of the Dead Sea, indicating that the valley where Sodom and Gomorrah stood is now covered by the waters of the Dead Sea. Only Zoar was spared in the great destruction of the cities of the plain.

The Rephaim lived in Bashan, in the city of the horned Ashteroth, a goddess with the head of a cow. Og was the last of their kings. The Horites lived in Petra and were expelled by the Edomites at a later date.

Another discovery is the fact that the king of Babylonia actually did serve the king of Elam at this period of history. An inscription has been found in which the king of Elam at about this time called himself the "Prince of the land of Amurru," that is, of Palestine and Syria. We know that these countries were then parts of the Babylonian Empire after the capture by Hammurabi of the kingdom of Mari.¹⁵ They had a code of laws and a postal system that was well established throughout the Babylonian Empire.

In the attack by Abraham brilliant strategy was used to rescue the captives. By charging both sides of the long column at once he gave the impression of a greatly superior army, and the suddenness of the night attack in the north near Damascus, where the army thought it was in a friendly region, accounted for the panic that seized Chedorlaomer's army.

C. Joseph in Egypt

From 1730 B.C. to 1580 B.C. there is no record of Egyptian history. The "Legend of Joseph," as the story of Joseph in Egypt was called by the historians and theologians of the nineteenth century, was believed

¹⁴ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

to be absolutely unhistorical, since no mention of him is made in Egyptian history. However, it has been discovered that the Hyksos tribes with chariots and horses invaded and conquered Egypt in 1730 B.C. They came from Canaan and Syria, and were called the "shepherd kings," bitterly hated by the Egyptians. When the Egyptians finally drove out the Hyksos, they erased all memory of them from the monuments. Joseph came to Egypt during their reign, and the absence of any mention of him is explained by the above fact of the destruction of the records of that period. "The Biblical description of the historical background is authentic; equally genuine is the colorful Egyptian detail. Egyptology confirms this from countless finds."¹⁶ Potiphar is the Egyptian name Pa-di-pa-ra, "the gift of the god Ra." A picture on the monuments of the installation of an Egyptian vizier corresponds to the description of the elevation of Joseph.¹⁷ An old waterway 200 miles long at Faiyûm is known throughout Egypt to this day as Bahr Yusuf, "Joseph's Canal."¹⁸

D. Confirmation of the Exodus Narrative

Coming down now some 400 years in Israelitish history, we reach the Exodus narrative. We find abundant evidence of the presence of Israelites in Egypt at this time, but particularly to be noticed is the remarkable way in which minor incidents in the Exodus narratives have been confirmed by archaeological discoveries—incidents which no one but a man living at that time could possibly have known, and which no one living at 500 B.C. with only vague tradition to go on could possibly have included in such a forgery as the critics say was foisted upon the Jewish people.

In the Exodus narrative, Exodus 1, it is recorded that the Egyptians set taskmasters over the Israelites and forced them to build the store cities of Pithom and Raamses. These were not far from the land of Goshen where the Israelites dwelt. In Exodus 5 it is stated that Pharaoh compelled them to make bricks without straw. When they took too much time gathering stubble, he forced them to make bricks without even stubble to bind them. In 1908 Professor Kyle examined the ruins of what seemed to be Pithom. "The lower courses in at least some of the store-chamber work, are laid with brick filled with good chopped straw; the upper courses made of brick having in them no binding

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

material whatever, and the middle courses are made of brick filled with stubble pulled up by the roots. The impress of the roots is as plainly marked in the brick as though cut by an engraver's tools."¹⁹ Albright formerly identified Pithom with Tell Retabeh, but later identified it with Tell el Maskhuta, which he thinks is Succoth. They are all in the same region, close to each other, so that the evidence above mentioned could apply to both.²⁰ The insignificant details of the Bible account, which it would be impossible to forge, are shown to be true in the minutest particular. Recent archaeological discoveries seem to indicate that Thothmes III was the Pharaoh of the oppression and that Amenhotep I was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, which therefore occurred about 1445 B.C. Solomon began to build his temple in 965 B.C., which I Kings 6:1 says was 480 years after the Exodus. When we add these two dates we get 1445 B.C.²¹ in the reign of Amenhotep II. Thothmes III, a great builder, probably built Pithom, which Rameses II restored later, when he put the inscription "I built Pithom" on the gateway. He put his name on numbers of temples and cities in Egypt,²² though they were originally built by other monarchs.

Dr. J. A. Thompson, in *Archaeology*, pp. 45-50, gives a strong case for the late date of the Exodus (ca. 1300 B.C.).

1. The residence of the Pharaoh seems to have been near the land of Goshen, for Moses could easily go back and forth from the court of Pharaoh to the Israelites. This was possible in two periods: during the reigns of the Hyksos kings, which would seem to be too early, and in the 19th Dynasty (1319 B.C.—1200 B.C.).

2. Thompson would take at face value the statement of Rameses II: "I built Pithom."

3. From 1850 B.C. to ca. 1300 B.C. there seem to have been no fortified

¹⁹ Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

²⁰ Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, pp. 85-86.

²¹ Cyrus H. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Testament Times*, p. 127: ". . . We date the historic migration of the Israelites to Egypt in the early part of the 13th Century, B.C." Probably Gordon means "from Egypt," not "to Egypt." Gordon holds to the late date of the Exodus. P. 131: "The story of the wandering in Transjordan before the entry into Palestine tells us of armed resistance offered by the kings of the area. Since the land was desolate down to the 13th century, there could have been no such resistance prior to that century."

This is an amazing argument! The argument from silence certainly is overworked. The apparent fact that no archaeological remains exist from the little portion of Transjordan that has been excavated is accepted as proving that the land was desolate before the thirteenth century, in spite of the plain evidence of the Bible that the land was occupied at the time of the entry of the Hebrews into Palestine, about 1445 B.C.

²² Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

cities in Transjordan, as there were when Moses defeated Og and Sihon. He believes that this suggests a period after 1300 B.C. for the Exodus. (See comments on this point in note 21.)

4. Bethel, Debir, Lachish, and Hazor were burned ca. 1250 B.C. These events fit in with the late date of the Exodus.

5. Dr. Kathleen Kenyon has shown that Jericho was burned several times, and that pottery from a period later than 1400 B.C. has been found in the graves near Jericho. Thompson says: "Most scholars today feel that the weight of evidence is for an Exodus from Egypt about 1290 B.C." (p. 49).

All this adds up to a strong argument for the late date (ca. 1300 to 1290 B.C.) of the Exodus. However, the evidence for the early date is likewise convincing, particularly I Kings 6:1. The present writer is therefore inclined to accept the early date for the Exodus, ca. 1445 B.C.

Hatshepsut, the daughter of Thothmes I, was the controlling force in Egypt during the first twenty years of the reign of Thothmes III. The probability is that she was the one who brought up Moses. The history of Egypt at this time accords very well with the story of the Exodus. The Hyksos kings had recently been overthrown, so that a king arose who "knew not Joseph."²³ The intense opposition of this dynasty to foreigners accounts well for the beginning of the oppression of the Hebrews.

During the forty years in the wilderness below the Dead Sea, the Egyptian control of Palestine weakened, and the land seethed with rebellion. The Tell el Amarna letters give us a picture of the land just at the time when Joshua must have been leading the Hebrews into it. Among these letters is one from Abi Hiba, the king of Jerusalem, to Pharaoh, which apparently refers to the invasion: "The Habiru" (this word might readily be identified with "Hebrews"), he says, "are devastating all the lands of the king. . . . If no troops arrive, the lands of the king, my lord, are lost." In another letter he says, "Now the Habiru are seizing the cities of the king. There is no local ruler left to the king; all is lost." In other letters he says, "Labaya and the land of Shechem have given everything to the Habiru"; "The land of the king is lost to the Habiru."²⁴ It is well known that vowels were never used in Hebrew writing, or in the language in which the Tell el

²³ Exodus 1:8.

²⁴ Robert Moore, "The Date of the Exodus," in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, July, 1929. Also Free, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.

Amarna letters were written, so there seems little doubt about the identification of the Hebrews with the Habiru. If this is correct, it presents definite corroboration of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, for, according to the Biblical account, the conquest of Canaan occupied considerable time, and the letters were written sixty-five years after the Exodus, or twenty-five years after the close of the wilderness period. Jerusalem itself was not conquered until the time of David.

E. The Conquest of Canaan

There has been considerable dispute among archaeologists as to the date of the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. Keller, Albright, and others think it was about 1250 B.C., with the Exodus occurring about 1290 B.C., forty years before.²⁵ Free²⁶ and others (including Garstang) put the date at about 1445 B.C., the date which the present writer accepts tentatively. The conquest of Canaan seems possible only in the period following 1445 B.C. from the time of Joshua through the time of the Judges. Before the time of Aahmes, who drove out the Hyksos, Palestine was firmly under the control of the Babylonians. Aahmes conquered Palestine and Syria up to the Euphrates River, and Egyptian control of Palestine lasted until the reign of Amenhotep III, about 1410 B.C. About that time Hittites and Amorites invaded the land and the Egyptian power collapsed. It is thus seen that the stage was set for Joshua's invasion and conquest, which would have been impossible before then.

As late as A.D. 1902 E. A. W. Budge, of the British Museum, expressed doubt as to the identification of the Hittites with the Hatti which Sayce had made in 1892.²⁷ In 1906 Hugo Winkler of Berlin proved that the site known as Boghaz-koi, in central Turkey, was the capital of the Hittite empire, and many clay tablets were discovered in the Hittite language. Thus, with the decipherment of the Hittite clay tablets, a people which had been only a name before came to life.

F. The Capture of Jericho

Startling confirmation of the account in the Book of Joshua has come to light from the excavation of the site of Jericho. Jericho has been destroyed and rebuilt at least ten times, in vivid illustration of the

²⁵ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁶ Free, *op. cit.*, p. 88. Garstang dates the fall of Jericho about 1400 B.C.

²⁷ Free, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.

Biblical curse that rested upon its rebuilding. When Garstang excavated Jericho between 1930 and 1936, the evidence disclosed was so striking that he, Père Vincent, the Roman Catholic archaeologist, and Clarence Fisher, the pottery and architectural expert, signed a statement as to what had been discovered. Free²⁸ quotes this at length: "The outer wall suffered most, its remains falling down the slope. The inner wall is preserved only where it abuts upon the citadel, or tower, to a height of eighteen feet; elsewhere it is found largely to have fallen, together with the remains of buildings upon it, into the space between the walls which was filled with ruins and debris. Traces of intense fire are plain to see, including reddened masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timbers²⁹ and ashes." A number of lines of evidence convinced Garstang that the city was destroyed by fire about 1400 B.C.

It used to be assumed by the critics that the story of the capture of Jericho was a myth, for, it was said, the idea of a great people walking around a great city like Jericho seven times in one day was impossible. Since Jericho has been excavated, it has been found that the city was so small and compact that one could walk around it easily in an hour, so that the fact mentioned in Joshua was entirely possible.

G. Michmash

In I Samuel 13:11 we are told that the Philistines assembled in Michmash. In the following chapter we are told that Jonathan and his armor bearer went from one side of the canyon and climbed up the other side and attacked the Philistines. During the First World War a brigade major in Allenby's army found the reference in the Bible to Michmash and realized that he had been ordered to capture a village on the opposite side of the canyon that corresponded to what Jonathan and his armor bearer had attacked successfully. The major and his commander sent out scouts and located the small pass. A company of soldiers then went up, overpowered the Turks on the other side, and occupied the flat place on the top. In the morning the Turks all took to their heels. The description of the site in the Bible was so exact that they were able to follow the directions exactly and won a great victory.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁹ The Rev. George Winn, a missionary to Korea, visited Jericho while on furlough, during the time when it was being excavated by Garstang. He brought back to Korea and gave to me a piece of charred wood, which he himself picked up from the stratum of remains of the city destroyed in Joshua's time.

H. *David's Capture of Jerusalem*

In II Samuel 5:8 we read David's words to his soldiers as they were trying to capture Jerusalem: "Whoever would strike down the men of Jebus, let him reach them by way of the water tunnel" (Berkeley Version). In 1867 Captain Warren visited the "Fountain of the Virgin Mary" in Jerusalem and noticed a dark cavity in the roof which apparently no one had before noticed. Suspecting that it might be a concealed passage, the next day he returned with a ladder and a long rope. He climbed up and found a straight shaft leading upward. Climbing much as a mountaineer goes up a "chimney," he eventually came out to a place where steps led upward, into a chamber where everything was covered with dust. He managed to get through a chink in the rock and found himself in broad daylight in the middle of the city. He had discovered the "way of the water tunnel" through which the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem obtained water in time of siege.³⁰ David's men captured the city by going up the same passage.

I. *The Davidic and Solomonic Empires*

It was formerly claimed that such an empire as the Bible describes existing in the time of David and Solomon was impossible because of the powerful empires on the Euphrates and the Nile which would effectually hinder its expansion. Archaeology has brought to light the fact that at any time in the history of that part of the world, for a thousand years or more, such an expansion as the Bible describes would have been impossible except at just the period mentioned in the Bible. At that time the empires on the Euphrates were at a low ebb, and the Egyptian Empire was likewise powerless. There was thus no strong power which could check Israel, and the empire of David and Solomon was possible—then and at no other time in the whole history of Israel. We see how perfectly the Bible account fits into world history. It is things of this kind almost more than the corroboration of individual events that prove the historicity of the account.

J. *Shishak*

After the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdom five years after Rehoboam became king of Judah, the Bible tells us that Jeroboam's old friend Shishak, the king of Egypt, with whom he had

³⁰ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

taken refuge before the death of Solomon, raided Jerusalem, taking away the shields of gold which Solomon had placed in the temple.³¹ Possibly Jeroboam invited his aid against Rehoboam, but if so he was sadly disappointed in his friend, for an inscription left by Shishak on the south wall of the temple at Karnak lists the despoiled Palestine cities and shows that he not only raided Judah but sacked many cities of Israel as well.³² Here we have a direct confirmation of a Bible passage at the beginning of the division of the kingdom.

K. *Tirhakah*

A very remarkable confirmation of a casual detail in the Bible narrative is found in regard to Tirhakah. In II Kings 19:9 Tirhakah is called the king of Ethiopia, and in connection with the invasion of Sennacherib the latter is said to have left the siege of Lachish in order to resist the attack of the Ethiopian king. The question naturally arises, What was the Ethiopian king doing up on the border of Palestine and Egypt? Here an inscription has turned up which proves that he had conquered Egypt and, while ruler of Egypt, was primarily the king of Ethiopia, thus confirming the Bible account. Incidentally, secular historians unite in saying that Sennacherib's defeat was due to the sudden death of about 185,000 of his army. Berosus, quoted by Josephus, says that it was due to pestilence. The Bible says an angel of the Lord did it but does not say what the angel used to kill them, so it may very well have been a pestilence. At any rate the important thing for us is the fact that the invasion of Sennacherib and his defeat caused by the death of large numbers of his army is confirmed by external evidence.

L. *Belshazzar*

Omitting the confirmation from external sources of the later history of the kingdom, let us look at one of the most questioned and recently confirmed portions of the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel, and particularly the story of Belshazzar. Up to very recently this story was ridiculed by the destructive critics. The rest of the Book of Daniel was declared to be unhistorical but special scorn was directed at Belshazzar because none of the classical authors made any mention of his name,

³¹ I Kings 14:25-26.

³² Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

and because Nabunaid, or Nabunidus as he is also called, was the last king of Babylon before the soldiers of Cyrus conquered the city. It seemed for many years that there was no room in the history of the city for a king of Babylon who was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and who was called Belshazzar, to have reigned there. The example of Belshazzar is a particular thorn in the side of the destructive critics, for it illustrates beautifully the way in which their whole method is at fault. Their arguments are too often based on ignorance of the actual circumstances surrounding the conditions which are recorded in the Biblical text. The apparent lack of harmony between the Bible and external evidence due to ignorance of the actual conditions of the time and place has over and over been shown to be false when more evidence comes to light. "Belshazzar, a son of Nabunidus, whose identity as coregent and administrator of the Babylonian kingdom is established beyond dispute, is mentioned in three chapters of Daniel."³³ When the Bible calls Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar, the term "son" is used as meaning "descendant."³⁴ A number of inscriptions mention the fact that oaths were taken in his name, and oaths were taken only in the name of a person who actually had the power and rank of a king.³⁵ "According to Babylonian records, Belshazzar is associated as coruler with his father as early as 553 B.C."³⁶ "In the delivery of royal tribute, the two names are closely associated."³⁷ There is also evidence tending to show that Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar through a daughter who was the wife of Nabunaid. From analogy we know that it was customary for kings of that time to associate their sons with them in power, the son being called a king and having the rank and power of a king. The fact that Daniel is said to have been made the third ruler of the kingdom indicates that Nabunaid was the first, Belshazzar the second, and so Daniel was therefore made the third. Thus the Book of Daniel is corroborated in every detail, for since a grandson could according to Oriental custom be called a son, Belshazzar could be called the son of Nebuchadnezzar.³⁸

³³ Samuel J. Schultz, *The Old Testament Speaks*, p. 370.

³⁴ Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 359.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

³⁶ Schultz, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

³⁷ Young, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

³⁸ For a detailed refutation of the critics' arguments on this point, see Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, Chapter VI.

V. THE ARGUMENT FOR THE HISTORICITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FROM THE NAMES OF THE KINGS

A. *Accuracy of the Names*

One of the strongest arguments for the historicity of the Old Testament is found in the accuracy with which the names of the kings mentioned in the Old Testament have been transmitted to us in our present documents of the Old Testament. Dr. R. D. Wilson, late Professor of Semitic Languages at Princeton Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary, in investigating the titles and names of the nations of the ancient civilized world, read all the extant literature and all the inscriptions on the monuments in their original languages of the nations embraced in the Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian and various Semitic empires and kingdoms, as well as the more modern empires of Greece and Rome, down to the time of Christ, and collated over 100,000 references and inscriptions which contain titles and names of their rulers. A careful study enabled Dr. Wilson to establish the laws by which proper names were transliterated from one language to another. It happens that the names of forty-one of the kings mentioned by name in the Old Testament from the time of Abraham to the end of the Old Testament period are also found in contemporary documents and inscriptions written in the time of and usually under the direction of these kings themselves, in their own language. The 41 names contain 161 consonants. (Vowels were not written in these ancient inscriptions and documents.)

1. There are the names of five Egyptian, five Assyrian, five Babylonian, five Persian, and nine Hebrew kings, and names of kings of various other countries.

2. The remarkable thing is that every one of these names can be recognized perfectly in the contemporary documents of the countries over which they reigned, and that the consonants found in the forty-one names are also found in the documents and monuments of the countries. Out of the 161 consonants in the names of the kings all but two or three are so exact a transliteration of the original consonants that there is not a particle of a doubt that they are the same. The two or three only can *possibly* be disputed!

3. At first sight the accuracy by which these consonants have been transmitted to us does not appear especially wonderful. But when we

compare the way in which consonants in the names of the kings mentioned in other lists in non-Hebrew countries have been handed down, we cannot help but marvel at the accuracy of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

For example, Manetho, an Egyptian priest living in the third century B.C., made a list of the 140 Egyptian kings, from the first dynasty to the last. He transliterated these names into Greek, and the list has come down to us in Greek. Of the 140 names, from 22 dynasties, 63 have no syllables which can be recognized in any of the names of the Egyptian kings mentioned on the Egyptian monuments themselves, and 28 others have only one syllable like the names on the monuments. In other words, about 65 per cent of the names in this list have been handed down in a corrupt manner.

Pseudo-Callisthenes, in his life of Alexander the Great, gives the names of the twelve companions of Alexander, and this work is known in the Syrian and Greek languages. Not one name in the Syrian version can be recognized in the Greek list of companions!

The ancient historian Africanus, in his history of the Assyrians, gives the names of forty-one kings of Assyria. In comparing this list with the monuments themselves, we can recognize only one name of a king in the whole list, and that one is not correct!

These instances from secular literature show the extreme difficulty of transliterating proper names from one language to another and then the extreme difficulty of transmitting the names correctly through a number of copyings. When we compare the way proper names have been transmitted in secular literature with the way in which the names of the kings mentioned in the Bible were both transliterated and transmitted to us, we can only marvel at the accuracy with which the Bible historians worked, and also at the painstaking care with which the scribes who copied the original documents and the endless procession of documents in the line of descent down to the present Hebrew text of the Old Testament did their work!

B. Presence of the Names

The presence of these names of the kings in the text of the Old Testament is in itself the most convincing proof of the historicity and trustworthiness of the Old Testament that could be imagined. The writers had and used absolutely accurate information about the history which they describe. Suppose, for example, as the critics say was the

case, that the Old Testament, or at least large portions of it, was forged in the time of Ezra, about 400 B.C., and that a great many of the books such as Daniel, parts of Isaiah, Kings, Chronicles, and Jeremiah were written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, about 200 B.C., and dated by the forgers of that time, back to the days of Moses to Cyrus, according to the traditional dating of the documents of the Old Testament. Now according to this theory, the men who forged the documents had no authentic documents from which to write their books, but took only vague traditions about the old-time events current in their day. They may have known the names of the kings, but to put them in their proper order, in time, and to get them in the proper country, would be largely a matter of guesswork on their part. Can we account for the Old Testament's containing the names of these forty-one kings in their proper countries, in the right order in time, in the exact place in the history of their countries, and correctly spelled by saying that imposters living centuries later were *guessing*, with no accurate sources to which to go?

In replying to the idea that forgers might be able to make such a correct guess, we note first of all the facts of the case. In the countries in which 37 of these kings lived, from approximately 1000 B.C. to 400 B.C., nearly 300 kings ruled for different lengths of time. In the corresponding period in the Bible 37 kings are mentioned by name. We are supposing, remember, that the writer who forged the Bible documents had no accurate sources, and that all he had to follow was vague tradition, which contained the names of these 300 kings. Under such conditions what would be the mathematical probability that he would put the 37 kings in their proper order in time, in their proper countries, and in their proper place in the history of their countries, if he were guessing? Dr. Wilson reckoned that this probability would be represented by the ratio

$$P = \frac{300 \times 299 \times 298 \times 297 \dots \times 264}{37 \times 36 \times 35 \times 34 \times 33 \dots \times 1}$$

or, in other words, by approximately the ratio of

1 to 220,000 $\times$ 1,000,000 to the 8th power!

A moment of thought will show how impossible it would be for such a guess to be correct. It is practically a mathematical certainty that the writers of the source books of the Old Testament lived in times con-

temporaneous with the events which they describe, and had absolutely accurate information at their disposal. In addition, the amazing accuracy with which the books containing these names have been handed down to us not only forces us to believe in the inspiration of the original documents but almost points to the divine control of the copyists themselves, a claim no one attempts to make! Now if the original writers and all the copyists were so painstakingly accurate in regard to recording the names of the kings, where we have shown that it is the easiest thing in the world to make mistakes, and where no other document in history has *not* made mistakes, *how much more* likely would these writers have been to hand down correctly the events and prophecies and revelations in the books themselves, things which were infinitely more important than the names of the kings, and which it is comparatively easy to transmit correctly!

The above argument of Dr. Wilson supplies conclusive proof of the historicity and absolute accuracy of the Old Testament. Remember that this argument is based on the text of the Bible as it now stands, with no attempt to correct any portion of it.

VI. CONCLUSION

We have now tested the Old Testament at various points and everywhere found it historical. We have not attempted to present the great mass of corroborative evidence which archaeology has collected to support the trustworthiness of the Old Testament documents. We have dipped into the stream at various points and yet have found the water all of the same quality. Or, changing the figure, we have sunk shafts down to the solid rock at various places over the ground where we intend to erect our building, and find the rock all of the same solidity and strength, able to support any burden which we may place upon it. We do not need to excavate the whole territory in order to know what the nature of the underlying rock is. Shafts sunk here and there have told us that as well as though the whole had been excavated. It is not necessary to show how archaeology has corroborated every single book in the Bible in order to be sure of its historical trustworthiness. A few examples such as we have selected from the most disputed portions are sufficient to establish our belief. Let us remember that these are only a few of the many similar examples which might be cited from these and other books of the Old Testament, all supporting the historicity of the

Bible documents. Let us also remember that, though there are many places where we face serious problems in connection with the text of the Bible documents, these problems exist, not because the evidence *contradicts* the Bible text, but because the evidence is *insufficient* to make any argument against the Bible other than the *opinion* of those who oppose its trustworthiness. Certainly we are not to cast aside documents which have been proved historical over and over again in other places because someone expresses a mere *opinion* unsupported by evidence that the Bible is not correct in some place! When evidence which directly contradicts the Bible text is presented it will be time enough to reconsider our belief in its trustworthiness, but until then let us rest quietly in the knowledge not only that up to the present time such evidence has *not* been found but that a great mass of evidence *has* been found in support of the historicity of the Bible documents as we have them.

CHAPTER XI

THE HISTORICAL TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE BIBLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

In the nature of the case, it is more difficult to secure a large number of convincing historical corroborations of the New Testament from archaeological discoveries than of the Old Testament.

In the first place, the period of time covered by the New Testament is, according to the present dating of the books, less than a hundred years as compared with two thousand years or more during which the Old Testament history was happening and being written down in the different books.

In the second place, there are fewer contacts with other countries and secular historical events in the New Testament than in the Old, and consequently less chance of recovering archaeological remains that would directly confirm the New Testament. All New Testament history took place within the Roman Empire.

In the third place, since at no time during the two thousand years since the New Testament history was written has the history of the Roman Empire, where the New Testament events occurred, been entirely unknown, corroborations from secular history do not look remarkable no matter how numerous they may be, for it may always be replied that the history of the period would be known to anyone attempting to forge the documents, whereas the Old Testament forger, if there was one, is supposed to have lived many centuries after the events and would have had few if any opportunities to consult historical sources. In the case of the New Testament it is unthinkable that the documents could have been forged after the first half of the second

century, so there would have been far better chances to collect facts than an assumed Old Testament forger would have had.

In the fourth place, the materials used in writing the New Testament were of a kind that perish quickly in damp climates. The wonder is that we have any documents at all dating from the first century, and the only other source from which historical corroboration could be expected to come would be buildings, gravestones, and coins, with their several inscriptions.

In the fifth place, in the latter part of the first century A.D. intensive persecutions broke out in the Roman Empire, and everything connected with Christianity including the sacred books was hunted out and systematically destroyed wherever possible. Thus the preservation of extensive evidence corroborating the New Testament was at best highly improbable.

However, we must not give the impression that such corroborating material is lacking. Considering the facts mentioned above, it is really marvelous what a great quantity of corroborative material there is. The discovery of the papyri of the first century in Egypt, the explorations of Sir William Ramsay and others in Asia Minor, the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the discovery of various manuscripts in the monasteries, the inscriptions in the catacombs at Rome, the inscriptions on coins and temples, more recently the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and above all the great mass of manuscripts of the New Testament in the Greek, the manuscripts in other languages which we call versions, and the citations in the early Christian Fathers—all have given us a wealth of material both for the reconstruction of the text of the New Testament books, and for the corroboration of many historical points in such a way as to prove that the accounts must have been written either by eyewitnesses or by men who had their information from eyewitnesses and merely recorded the words of others.

II. GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL ACCURACY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Explorations in Bible lands have shown over and over again that the writers of the New Testament had a wonderful knowledge of the geography of the countries described—a knowledge which can only be explained as the knowledge of an eyewitness. Sir William Ramsay, who started his explorations in Asia Minor doubting the historicity of Acts,

bears testimony to this accuracy about points of geography and knowledge of political conditions which only a person living at that time and on that spot could possibly have had. He was so impressed with these facts that he became an ardent supporter of the historicity of Acts. What caused him to begin to think that Acts might after all be historical was the fact that he discovered an inscription marking the boundary between Phrygia and Lycaonia.¹ Up to that time historians supposed that Luke must have made a mistake in fixing the boundary between these two provinces between Iconium and Lystra, as he does in Acts 14:6; for as far as was known, the two places belonged to the same province all through this period, and therefore there would be no frontier between them such as is described in Acts. However, Sir William Ramsay one day turned up an inscription showing that the boundary at that time really was between these two places, and that Luke was right and the critics were wrong. The boundary was changed early in the second century, so that the Book of Acts must have been written before that time. This fact opened Sir William's eyes and led him to make further similar investigations, with the result that he became firmly convinced of the trustworthiness of Acts.

Historians have likewise confirmed the accuracy of the history in the Gospels. For example, only a person who was living then could have been familiar with the intricate conditions surrounding the political control of Palestine in the time of Christ and soon after, or with the complex religious conditions, parties, customs, and beliefs of the country. After the death of Herod the Great his dominions were divided, Archelaus reigning in Judea, Herod Antipas in Galilee and Perea, Philip in Ituria and Trachonitis, and Lysanias in Abilene. The author of the Gospel of Luke treads his way correctly between these political pitfalls and gives all the rulers their proper titles, assigning each to the proper region at the proper time. Later, when Pilate replaces Archelaus in Judea, the fact is accurately noted in the Bible.

III. CORROBORATION OF DIFFERENT ITEMS

A. *Quirinius and the Census*

One of the principal places where the historians long found fault with the historicity of Luke was in his mention of Quirinius and the

¹ Sir William Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, pp. 35-64.

census. The Gospel was presumably in error here, both in mentioning the census and in stating that Quirinius was the governor of Syria when Jesus was born. Previous to this the earliest census of which there was any record was under Nero in A.D. 61. However, among the papyri discovered in Egypt and published by the British Museum was one which established the fact that a census was taken every fourteen years throughout the Roman Empire.² Not only so, but it was ascertained that there was a census in the period between 9 B.C. to 6 B.C.³ Moreover, according to this document it was the custom for families to return to the original home of their family, so there is nothing strange in the fact that Joseph and Mary returned to Bethlehem for enrollment. It was long supposed that Luke confused the census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria in A.D. 6 to A.D. 9 with the one which he said occurred when Jesus was born,⁴ for it was not known that Quirinius was governor of Syria more than once. Especially was this the case because Tertullian stated that Sentius Saturninus was governor of the country at the time Jesus was born.

However, an inscription at Tibur makes it clear that Quirinius twice governed Syria as *legatus*, and another inscription found at Antioch shows that he was governor at the time Jesus was born. He was the military governor, while Saturninus was the civil governor, and the military governor always outranked the civil governor in a Roman province.⁵ Therefore the whole matter has been cleared up and Luke's account vindicated to the smallest detail.

B. *The Gospels*

It has been popular among the destructive critics to say that the Gospels were not written in the first century A.D. "Form criticism," developed by Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann, said that oral traditions developed certain literary forms such as the miracles, parables, and sayings of Jesus. Then in the second century A.D. these "forms" were incorporated in a running narrative to correspond to situations that existed in the second century. Bultmann held, for example, that the Gospel of John contained almost no truly historical material.⁶

² Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, p. 343.

³ Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, p. 285.

⁴ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, p. 242.

Albright proved that the Gospel of John shows a knowledge of the political and social conditions in Palestine before A.D. 70.⁷

The most convincing archaeological evidence for the traditional dating of the Gospel of John (about A.D. 90) has been the discovery and identification of a papyrus fragment of the Gospel (John 18:31-33, 37, 38). Experts agree that the copy of the Gospel from which this fragment came was in existence in the first half of the second century A.D. Kenyon points out that the original Gospel of John must have been composed some time before A.D. 130.⁸ That is so close to the traditional dating that the latter cannot be questioned. Kenyon holds that, if John was written in A.D. 90 and the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) were written some time before that, there was no time for the development of the oral "forms" assumed by the "form criticism." Even a great French liberal scholar, Maurice Goguel (according to Free), dates the Gospels in the first century.⁹

Medical testimony, according to Keller, declares that Jesus died on the cross very quickly of heart failure, caused by the sinking of the blood from the upraised arms to the lower limbs and the impoverishment of the blood flow to the heart.¹⁰ The Roman historian Tacitus, in his *Annals*, while explaining the meaning of the word "Christians," says: "Christ, from whom they derive their name, was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius."¹¹

C. Proconsul at Cyprus

Another striking way in which the New Testament documents have been vindicated is in the clearing up of the Scripture reference to the proconsul at Cyprus when Paul visited the island on the first missionary journey. It was long supposed that the proper title for the governor of this island was "pro-practor," as it was an imperial province at some time after this. However, we now know that the proper title at the time of Paul's visit was "proconsul," for an inscription has turned up in Cyprus, on a coin, with the exact spelling of the name of Paulus, and calls him "proconsul." The same family in Antioch spelled their

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-248.

⁸ Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Modern Scholarship*, p. 21.

⁹ Free, *op. cit.*, p. 303, quoting Maurice Goguel *L'Église Primitive*.

¹⁰ Keller, *op. cit.*, pp. 376-377.

¹¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, XV. 44.

name "Paullus." Thus Luke was proved correct even to the spelling of the name of Paulus.¹²

D. *Lysanias*

Luke 3:1 mentions Lysanias as the tetrarch of Abilene in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. A Lysanias is mentioned by Josephus as having reigned over this province in 36 B.C. and as having been killed by Mark Anthony. It therefore seemed for some time as though Luke had made a mistake here in placing Lysanias nearly sixty years later. However, inscriptions have been discovered which show that Luke was right: the Lysanias of the Gospel was a descendant of the one Josephus mentioned.¹³

E. *The Politarchs of Thessalonica*

One of the best illustrations of the accuracy of Acts is found in the purely incidental way in which the author threads his way through the complex political situations in the different cities mentioned on the missionary journeys. For example, Philippi was a Roman colony with few Jews, no synagogue, and a pro-praetor as ruler. Thessalonica, on the other hand, was a Greek city, with a constitution and a certain amount of autonomy. The magistrates were called "politarchs" in Acts, a title which occurs nowhere else in Greek literature. For many years it was supposed that Luke was in error here, and that the magistrates must have been called by some other name, but an inscription has been found on an arch which stood at the western end of the main street in Salonica, proving that "politarch" was the correct title of the magistrates and that Luke was right after all. Free says there are seventeen inscriptions in the city containing this term.¹⁴

IV. CONCLUSION

We might go on almost indefinitely with similar examples of the way the Bible statements have been proved true by external evidence from inscriptions, papyri, and various manuscripts, coins, the Dead Sea Scrolls, etc., but those given in the last two chapters are sufficient to establish the fact that wherever the Old and New Testaments can be

¹² Free, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-315.

¹³ Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 135.

¹⁴ Free, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

tested by external evidence they are proved to be trustworthy documents. Although this of course does not prove that the Bible is the Word of God, the fact that it is a trustworthy set of documents removes the most fundamental objection against the teaching of the Bible in regard to itself: that it is a book containing a revelation from God, and written under the power of the Holy Spirit. A Bible that was untrustworthy could not possibly be God's work or His Word, while a Bible that is trustworthy in all places where it can be tested by external evidence has the strongest kind of presumption in its favor that it is also true in those places where its claim of having been inspired cannot be tested by external evidence. If it is true, then its claim of having been inspired is also true, and it is indeed the Word of God. In the following chapters we will examine other objections that have been brought against its trustworthiness from a slightly different angle.

CHAPTER XII

THE INTEGRITY, GENUINENESS, AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last two chapters we have shown that the Bible is a historically trustworthy set of documents. Its statements agree with the historical facts as we know them from sources outside the Bible, wherever we can test them. This is the strongest kind of evidence that the Book we now have came down to us in an uncorrupted condition from men who knew and wrote from firsthand knowledge what actually occurred, for documents corrupted in transmission through the ages would inevitably become filled with error. If, then, the documents are shown to be free from error, that is almost proof positive that they are not corrupt. But a document might be historically trustworthy without being in any way divinely inspired, so in dealing with the Bible, we face two questions of great importance to the issue of whether or not the Bible is the Word of God. First, who were the original writers? Were they men who could rightly claim to have received divine guidance in writing their books? Second, are the documents purported to have been written by them actually the words which they wrote—in other words, have their original writings been transmitted to us in a pure form? The rest of this book will be taken up largely with an attempt to answer these questions with evidence and arguments presented from various angles, but in this chapter we shall concern ourselves principally with the question of the transmission of the documents and endeavor to decide as far as possible who wrote the different books of the Bible. With most books the only question of importance is whether they are historically trustworthy, but with the Bible the case is entirely different, for what with other books would be only an academic question as to

the authorship and integrity, after the trustworthiness was shown, becomes with the Bible a paramount question, for the Bible claims to have been divinely inspired in the *original documents*! If this claim is to be accepted as true, the documents which we now have must be shown to be substantially the same as the originals; their authors must be shown to have been men whom we might reasonably expect to have been inspired while writing those documents; and the evidence and proof of such inspiration must be amply attested by well-authenticated miracles and fulfilled prophecy, which we have shown to be the only credentials God could give to man to attest revelation. We shall first discuss the question of the integrity and genuineness of the text of the Bible.

It hardly needs to be mentioned that the text of any translation of the Bible is not to be regarded as inspired by God. God may have providentially aided the translators to apprehend the truth of the original-language documents and to translate it accurately, but technically speaking it was only the *original text* in the *original language* before it was copied that was inspired. As far as it is an accurate translation of the original thought of the writer the *content* of the version is inspired, though there are nuances in the meaning of words in one language that are almost impossible to put accurately into another.

This does not mean that the text of the translation, or version, is not a trustworthy reproduction, in the main, of the *thought* of the original language. Every translation aims to reproduce exactly the thought of the original text. The places in which it fails are the places where there is a dispute among scholars as to what the thought of the original text is. Of course, when the translators are theologically prejudiced (as was the case when the translators of the Revised Standard Version translated the Hebrew word *almah* as "a young woman" in the body of the text of Isaiah 7:14, while they put what is undoubtedly the true meaning of the word, "virgin," in the footnote), wrong meanings of the original text can perhaps unintentionally enter the text of the translation. It is a fact, however, that even theologically biased translators ordinarily seek to reproduce the original thought. Translations, therefore, even the poorest of them, can usually be depended upon to be honest efforts to reproduce the thought of the original language. Nevertheless, in all cases the original text is the authority, for the translation is only the expression of opinion on the part of the translators as to what the meaning of the original text is. Anyone who can read the

original language of the text has a right to express his opinion of the meaning of the text, and no one has a right to insist that he accept the opinion of other people. Different interpretations of the Bible, and contrasted views of theology founded on them, arise in this way. It cannot justly be urged as an argument against believing in the truths taught in the Bible that scholars do not agree about the interpretation of the Bible texts, nor can this fact be offered as an argument against the inspiration of the Bible, for it is not the fault of the Bible that our ignorance prevents us from understanding what the original writers said, and actually the points upon which scholars disagree are few. On most points scholars agree upon the meaning of the text. No one can be justified in rejecting the Bible on that ground, for even if one were to accept only those portions of the Bible where opinion is united as to the meaning of the text, there would be no excuse for rejecting Christ or any of the principal doctrines of the Christian faith. The facts as to what is necessary for salvation are so plain that no one can escape their meaning. In no translation or commentary are they obscured or explained away. Indeed, everyone who has studied the original texts admits that all translations faithfully reproduce the thought of the originals for all practical purposes. The person who cannot read Greek or Hebrew need have no hesitation in accepting the translation in his own tongue as embodying the truths of Scripture as a whole. The only real caution one would need to observe in this connection is never to build too great deductions with only a single verse as a foundation, without first verifying the translation of the verse in some way. If this caution is observed, the translation into any other tongue may be used with freedom and every confidence that it contains the truth of Scripture.

II. THE TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

A. *The Text of the Old Testament*

The Old Testament text is in Hebrew, with a few later portions in Aramaic. The earliest portions of the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch, were probably written in a Canaanite dialect¹ resembling or identical with Old Hebrew, but in cuneiform script, the wedge-

¹ Cyrus H. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Testament Times*, p. 80; "They [Amarna Letters] do provide important data on the language of Canaan, which the Hebrews adopted as their own."

shaped characters in which the Babylonians wrote their language on clay tablets and rocks. We know that the cuneiform script was in use in Palestine in the time of Moses, and that the educated Egyptians knew how to read and write it, for the Tell el Amarna letters were written in this script, and in a Canaanite dialect of the Babylonian language, about the time of Moses. When the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai they must have been written on either stone or clay because Moses in anger broke the first set on the Mount, while the fact that when the Law was found in the days of King Josiah, a scribe, Shaphan, was called upon to read it is an indication that it was in a script which the ordinary man of the day could not read.

Now we know from the Moabite Stone that the Canaanite or Old Hebrew script had been in use for 178 years before this time. If the Law of Moses had been found by the workmen, written in this Hebrew script, in all probability someone aside from the special scribe Shaphan would have read it before calling for a special scribe. From the knowledge we have of how widespread education was at that period, it is unthinkable that the whole court of the king would have had to wait until the special scribe could be called before reading the exciting discoveries which had been made in the temple. All the circumstantial evidence therefore points to cuneiform as the script in which the original Law was written, while the fact that the king and all the hearers could understand it when read indicates that the language was the same as their own, namely, Hebrew.

We have no way of knowing when this cuneiform copy of the Law was first transcribed into Hebrew, but probably it was done at about this time, for a zealous king like Josiah would no doubt want the Law in a script which he himself could read. For practical purposes it makes little difference when this was done, though such transcription helps to explain many points which are not clear in the older parts of the Old Testament; the numbers, for instance, which seem to harmonize with difficulty, might easily be explained as mistakes in transcription from the notation system in the cuneiform script to the notation system in the Hebrew script, and later to the written-out figures in our Hebrew Bibles. To show why this make little difference, let us take a modern example from the Korean language. Korean may be written either in Chinese characters or in a native script called "kuk-mun." If a book written in Chinese mixed script were given to ten Korean scholars to

transcribe into "kuk mun," probably the "kuk mun" copies would be practically identical, though the men did the work independently, for the sound of the character would be the same in every case. Any differences would be due to errors of sight, and to differences of opinion between the scribes as to what "kuk mun" letters would best represent the sound of the Chinese character. In no case would the meaning of the words themselves be changed, and they would all agree that the sound of the Chinese character was the same. The "kuk mun" copies would be an exact reproduction of the Chinese original text in a different script. In exactly the same way the Hebrew words were unchanged by being transcribed into another script. Therefore the fact of such transcription or the time when it was done makes little difference to us.

B. Manuscripts of the Old Testament

The Hebrew Bible was first printed in A.D. 1526, and since then all editions have been practically identical. The text of the printed Bible is taken from Hebrew manuscripts, of which there are now about 1,000 in existence. The text as we have it consists of consonants, with certain dots and short lines to indicate vowels which are to be read with the consonants. The original text in Old Testament times consisted only of consonants. The signs called "vowel points" were added after A.D. 600, probably about A.D. 700. There are also certain consonantal letters called "vowel letters," which were not in the original text. The modern scholar, therefore, is at liberty to ignore the vowel points, and to read different vowels in their places if he feels that the meaning demands it, for the vowel points were not written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; they represent merely the interpretation of the meaning of the passage by Jews of A.D. 700.

Up to the time of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew manuscript which we had dated from A.D. 916, so in order to determine what the text was back of that date, we must use other means than Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. For the purpose of deciding what the original text was we turn to a number of different sources: Masoretic notes, citations in the Talmud, commentaries, versions, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Zadokite Fragments, etc.

C. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Early in 1947 the first of a series of astounding discoveries was made by a young Arab named Muhammad adh-Dhib. In a cave near the

upper part of the Dead Sea some of what are now called the "Dead Sea Scrolls" were found. Subsequently other fragments were discovered in other caves near the ruins of what is called the Qumran Community. Of most interest to us are a leather manuscript containing the whole of the Book of Isaiah and another manuscript containing a part of the Book of Isaiah. Many fragments of almost every book in the Old Testament were also found, as was a commentary on the Book of Habakkuk. The most important other manuscript was a Book of Discipline of the Qumran Community. Still other books were found. It has been claimed that a large part of the Pentateuch appears on some of these scrolls.

According to the wild assertions of some opponents of Christianity, these scrolls show that the New Testament writers got most of their doctrines from the Qumran Community. Dr. Edward J. Young, of Westminster Theological Seminary, who has carefully weighed the evidence, declares that while there may be a few formal likenesses, when the doctrines of both are carefully examined, they are found to teach totally different doctrines. For example, it has been claimed that the doctrine of justification by faith had its origin in Qumran, yet when the scrolls are carefully examined, it is found that Qumran taught works and faith in the Commentary on Habakkuk, and that is just the opposite of the Christian doctrine of salvation by faith *alone*. The Qumran Community had a communal meal, but it had nothing whatever of eating and drinking in remembrance of anyone. There were ceremonial hand washings, much as is the case with the Moslems, but nothing of either immersion or sprinkling in the name of anyone, as we have in Christian baptism. In short, the inner content of the Qumran doctrines is totally different from that of the Christian doctrines.

There now seems to be a consensus of opinion that these manuscripts were probably produced in the first century before Christ, and possibly before that. Their real significance is that we now have independent witnesses to a great deal of the Old Testament, from before the time of Christ. Remarkably enough, these manuscripts are practically identical with the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament which has come down to us in our Bible. For example, there are only thirteen minor differences in the text of Isaiah and the text of our Old Testament Isaiah!² We can be sure that the text of our Hebrew Bibles is practically the same as the text which existed in the century before Jesus Christ. The theory of the destructive critics that there were two Isaiahs,

² Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 305.

from which our Book of Isaiah was constructed, has no evidence in its favor in the Dead Sea copy of Isaiah. Professor Dewey M. Beegle holds that the Isaiah scroll dates from the second century B.C.³ Taken as a whole, the Dead Sea Scrolls are the most important textual evidence discovered in modern times and unquestionably support the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text.

D. The Masoretic Notes

The phrase "Masoretic Text" means "the text which was handed down among the Jews." In the margins of the text of the Hebrew Bible are various notes which the Hebrew scribes put down to indicate the readings of the other manuscripts in their day when the text they were copying differed from other manuscripts. By studying these notes we can discover what the Hebrew text of the Bible was in A.D. 500.

E. The Method of Securing Accuracy of the Text by the Scribes

At a very early date, probably about the time of Ezra, the Jews attained an almost superstitious reverence for the text of the Old Testament itself. Some time in the early centuries of the Christian era they adopted a unique plan to secure the absolute accuracy of the text in copying. The words and verses in the whole Old Testament were counted, and the middle verse and word were ascertained. The number of words and verses in each book was likewise found and the middle verse and word were ascertained. The middle verse and word of the Law were found, and even the middle letter in each book and section was accurately made sure and recorded. Whenever any scribe copied the Old Testament, in whole or in part, he counted the verses, words, and letters of his copy and checked up the middle verses, words, and letters in each section, book, and the whole Old Testament, thus assuring meticulous accuracy in the copy. Consequently, the Hebrew text which we have has been handed down to us from the time when this practice was started, practically without the change of a letter. Probably this fact explains the close correspondence of our present text with the text of the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, and gives us confidence in the text of the rest of the Old Testament.

F. Citations in the Talmud

There are two recensions of the Talmud, an eastern and a western edition. The Talmud is a collection of the sayings of various scribes,

³ Dewey M. Beegle, *God's Word into English*, cover.

which were transmitted orally for many centuries and at last committed to writing at about A.D. 200, though many sections were added later. In the two editions of the Talmud are found citations which include almost all the Old Testament books. It is possible from these citations to reconstruct most of the Law and large portions of the other books. From these citations we know that the text of the Old Testament of A.D. 200, and probably for hundreds of years before, since the Talmud was transmitted orally for several centuries before being committed to writing, was practically what the Hebrew text is today. This is again confirmed by the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

G. Jerome's Latin Vulgate

Jerome, in about A.D. 400, translated the Old Testament into the Latin Vulgate and wrote a commentary on the Old Testament in which the Hebrew words were transliterated into Latin. Thus from independent sources, since the Jews and Christians had no dealings with each other, we know that the present-day Hebrew text of the Old Testament is practically the same as that in the third century of the Christian era.

H. Syriac Version

The Old Testament was translated into Syriac about A.D. 200. This translation enables us to decide what the Hebrew text must have been at that time, and we find it practically the same as the text we have today.

I. Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament

Another indication that the text of the Old Testament in the time of Christ was practically the same as the text we use today is the fact that the quotations of the Old Testament found in the New Testament are from the same Old Testament as ours. In many places the New Testament writers apparently quoted from memory, but they quoted from the same Scriptures as ours, though from the Septuagint version. Thus back to the time of Christ we have two independent witnesses for the text of the Old Testament, for the Christians and Jews had no dealings with each other and therefore there was no opportunity for collusion in regard to the text of the Old Testament. These two independent lines indicate that the Bible of Christ and the apostles was the same as our Old Testament.

J. Ecclesiasticus

This book, written in Hebrew about 200 B.C., quotes extensively from the Old Testament, and we know from the quotations that the author used the same Old Testament we do.

K. The Book of Jubilees

The Book of Jubilees, written in about 200 B.C., repeats most of Genesis verse for verse. Since there are only twenty-five minor variations from our present text in this book, the text of the Old Testament at that time must have been substantially the same as it is today.

L. The Septuagint Version

This version, so called because it was supposed to have been the joint translation of seventy-two scribes working independently, is by far the most important version of the Old Testament which we have. It was translated between 300 B.C. and 100 B.C. at various times for the Greek-speaking Jews of the dispersion. Since it was all written long before the time of Christ, it enables us to see what the text of the Old Testament was at that time (300 B.C. to 100 B.C.) The text as a whole was substantially the same as that which we now have, and the few minor changes enable us to make a number of unimportant corrections in the readings of the Masoretic (*Masora*-“tradition”) Text. Taken with the invaluable Dead Sea Scrolls (parts of all the Old Testament books except Esther have been discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls), the Septuagint version shows that we have practically the same Old Testament text that Christ and the apostles used and upon which Christ placed his stamp of approval.

M. The Samaritan Pentateuch

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls the most important witness to the text of the Pentateuch was the Samaritan Pentateuch. It dates from the time of Nehemiah, when certain priests were driven out of Jerusalem and went to Sanballatt, who established a temple and worship of Jehovah on Mount Gerizim. They took a copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch with them, and from that time to the present handed down the text of the Pentateuch in a line entirely separate from that of the Jews, for, as the Gospels tell us, the Samaritans and the Jews had no dealings with each other, so they could not have been in collu-

sion on the text of the Pentateuch (cf. John 4:9). The Samaritan text agrees almost exactly with the text of the present Hebrew Bible.

N. *The Names of the Kings*

In Chapter X we found that the 161 consonants in the names of the kings agree exactly with the consonants found on the monuments. It was there pointed out that if these consonants, which were so difficult to hand down correctly, have reached us unchanged, it is far more likely that the other portions, which can easily be transmitted, have also been handed down correctly. We thus have the strongest kind of argument that our text is substantially the same as the text which came from the hands of the original writers.⁴

O. *The Importance of the Old Testament Text*

Perhaps all this detailed proof may seem unimportant to some readers, but since the question which is involved is nothing less than that of the deity of Jesus Christ, let us be patient in the examination of the evidence for the Old Testament text. Jesus Christ placed His stamp of approval on nearly all the most disputed portions of the Old Testament, so he who is forced to reject any portions of the Old Testament as unauthentic or unhistorical must logically reject either the omniscience or the honesty of our Lord, who taught that they were historical and authentic. We have shown that the text which Christ and the Apostles used was the text which has come down to us, and we have also shown that this text is historical and trustworthy. The next chapter will present further evidence on the subject, but at present we must close this discussion and show that the text of the New Testament is likewise authentic, and the text which was produced by the original writers.

III. THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. *Introduction*

The text of the Greek New Testament used today, such as that of Nestle, Tischendorf, B. Weiss, Westcott and Hort, or the resultant text of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which takes the textual read-

⁴ A few fragments of the Old Testament (the Nash Papyrus and Rylands Fragments) have also come down to us from pre-Christian (after 100 B.C.) times. These also show that our text of the Old Testament is accurate.

ings agreed upon by at least two of the others, is so accurate that in the opinion of eminent scholars it is the same as when it came from the hands of the original writers in 999 words out of every thousand,⁵ and the one word out of every thousand about which there is still doubt in no instance affects the meaning of any vital doctrine of the church. The confidence that we have substantially the text of the New Testament as it came from the hands of the original writers is based upon the knowledge collected by textual critics from a study of the manuscripts of the New Testament, versions, citations in the patristic writings, and internal evidence of the Bible documents themselves. A discussion of the methods of textual criticism by which this knowledge has been obtained, and the principles upon which it is based, would take us too far afield, but let us briefly mention its chief sources.

B. *The Manuscripts*

Von Soden, the German scholar, in 1902 catalogued 2,328 New Testament manuscripts. Of these about 40 contain in whole or in part all the books of the New Testament; 1,716 contain portions of the Gospels; 581, of the Acts; 628, of the Pauline Epistles; and 219, of the Apocalypse.⁶ By a systematic study of these manuscripts, the noting of characteristic variants, the grouping of the manuscripts in families, and the comparison with the versions and other sources, the approximate date of each manuscript can be determined, and the text of the original documents from which the manuscripts were copied can be accurately reconstructed. The most important of these manuscripts are as follows:

1. *Codex Sinaiticus*—"S." This is the best and most important manuscript which has been discovered. It dates from the early part of the fourth century and gives us practically the text of the whole New Testament as it was at the time of the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. It is now in the British Museum.

2. *Codex Vaticanus*—"B." Almost equally valuable and of about the same age is the manuscript called the Codex Vaticanus. It contains almost the whole Bible except a few of the later books of the New Testament. It is now in Rome in the Vatican library.

3. *Codex Alexandrinus*—"A." This is a fourth- or fifth-century manuscript containing nearly all the New Testament. It dates from approximately A.D. 425 and was apparently copied in Alexandria. It is

⁵ F. J. A. Hort.

⁶ C. M. Cobern, *The New Archaeological Discoveries*, p. 174.

designated as Codex "A." The Byzantine text follows "A" in the Gospels.

4. *Codex Ephraemi*—"C." This is a fifth-century palimpsest (a leather codex with the original ink scraped out and another manuscript written over it). It originally contained a Greek copy of the Bible written in about A.D. 450. By the use of infrared light the Greek text has been made out and photographed. The manuscript over the Greek copy of the text is a work by the Syrian theologian Ephraim.

5. *Codex Bezae*—"D." This fifth- or sixth-century manuscript is of great value for fixing the text of certain passages in the New Testament. It is the best example of the so-called Western Text.

6. *The Chester Beatty Papyri*. These consist of a number of fragments on papyri of the New Testament. Among them is a collection of Paul's letters (Codex P⁴⁶). The manuscripts are dated by experts at about A.D. 200; they are thus much older than the best other manuscripts.

7. *Later Greek manuscripts of the New Testament*. In addition to the manuscripts listed above and another called the Codex Washingtoniansis, "W," there are a large number of Greek manuscripts that support what is called the Byzantine Text, "K," of the New Testament. It was this text that became what we call the "Textus Receptus," and was followed in the main by the translators of the King James Version. This will be discussed later.

8. *Versions*. An extremely important line of evidence for fixing the text of the New Testament is found in the various versions, or translations into other languages. By studying these translations it is possible to determine the Greek text back of the translation and to ascertain what the text was back in the second century. Among the most important of the versions is the Syriac Palimpsest discovered in 1892 at Sinai by Mrs. A. S. Lewis and her sister, a version which bears the same relation to the Greek of the Gospels as the Septuagint does to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. This manuscript is probably dated around A.D. 400, but it is a copy of a translation made into Syriac about A.D. 150 or a little later, within about fifty years of the apostolic age. In this case it is perhaps one of the best witnesses to the text of the Gospels that we have. It shows that our text is substantially the same as the one used in the middle of the second century.

Other important versions are the Syriac "Diatessaron," the Curetonian Syriac, and the Peshitta Syriac, the Coptic versions, Early Latin

versions, the Ethiopic, the Gothic, the fourth-century Latin Vulgate (which was followed in the Roman Catholic Douai version), and the Armenian versions. All are a great help in fixing the text, and enable us to be sure that we have essentially the text of the original writers.

9. *Citations in the apostolic and church Fathers.* It has been stated that if the whole New Testament were to be lost, we could practically reconstruct it from the citations by the Fathers in their writings. These works take us back to the second century and confirm the certainty that the New Testament they used was the same New Testament we have today.

10. *The witness of the enemies of the gospel.* The enemies of Christianity have left some of the best evidence for the historicity of the New Testament that we have. Celsus, Lucian, and Porphyry all constantly refer to the New Testament as being in existence in their time, and as being the accepted sacred books of the Christian Church. Thus we know from external sources that the books which we have existed back in the second century. If they existed as we now have them, then, so near to the times of the apostles, they could not have been forged by impostors without the knowledge of enemies of Christianity, who would have exposed their falsity. The fact that the enemies accepted them as genuine is the strongest proof that they are actually what they claim to be, the accounts of eyewitnesses of the events which happened in the time of Christ and soon afterward.

11. *The classification of the texts.* Textual critics have divided the various manuscripts and other sources into three general classes: (a) the *Western Text*, the best examples of which are "D" and "D₂" (the former contains the Gospel and Acts, while the latter contains the Pauline Epistles); (b) the *Neutral* or *Alexandrian Text*, the best examples of which are Aleph "8" and "B," the Vaticanus (25 other Greek manuscripts and the Bohairic and Sahidic versions follow the Alexandrian type of text); (c) the *Byzantine* or *Eastern Text*, containing the vast majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts (this was the text used by the Greek-speaking Greek Orthodox Church from apostolic times, by the churches of the Protestant Reformation for three centuries after it, and by the early English versions and the King James Version).

12. *Which text is closest to the original autographs?* Since the time of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and B. Weiss, New Testament textual critics of both conservative and liberal camps have almost unanimously considered the Neutral text the most reliable. A recent

(1956) book by Edward F. Hills challenges this position very forcefully and convincingly. He points out that Kirsopp Lake (1928) after an exhaustive study of the Byzantine manuscripts found no cases of one manuscript's being copied from another of the extant manuscripts. "This strongly suggested to Lake the hypothesis that the monks of the Byzantine Period followed the Jewish practice of destroying their sacred books, when they finally had become tattered and unsightly from constant use, and replacing them with fresh copies. And only in this way could he explain the fact that out of the thousands of New Testament manuscripts which must have existed during the heyday of the Byzantine Empire (from the fourth to the tenth century) only a small remnant survives."⁷ Hills points out that J. W. Burgon (1813-1888), the Dean of Chichester, had taken the same position, though it was universally rejected by the naturalistic critics. The manuscripts used by the Greek Orthodox Church in the Eastern Roman Empire were used so constantly and copied so frequently that they wore out and then were destroyed after fresh copies were made.

Hills then makes three points. (a) Modern studies of the manuscripts in the Byzantine group show that they agree so closely that they can be said to contain the same text. (b) Though these manuscripts agree with each other very closely, there are minute differences that show they were not copied from each other, but each was copied from lost ancestors. (c) Though most of the extant Byzantine manuscripts are relatively late, they represent a text used before the fourth century, for that text is found in the writings of Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, and Theodoret.

Hills then argues that since this text was used and preserved from apostolic times it represents what was *providentially preserved by God in a public way by being in constant use in the Greek Orthodox, Greek-using church down to the times of the Reformation and then afterward in the "Textus Receptus," from which the King James Version was translated.*

He argues that the reason the Neutral and Western Text manuscripts are so much older than the Byzantine manuscripts is that they were rejected as imperfect by the Greek-speaking church and thus were not used or copied constantly as were the manuscripts of the Byzantine group. He holds, therefore, that this group of manuscripts contains the providentially preserved text as it came from the hands of the

⁷ Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 43.

original authors, and that the Byzantine Text is therefore far better than the Neutral Text followed by most critics today. He analyzes at great length the passages such as John 7:53 to 8:12 and tries to prove that the passages should be included in the New Testament.

Doubtless most critics today will reject his thesis, but it seems very convincing.

13. *Who were the authors of the New Testament?*

This is the question which we must now consider. Even though we do know that the copies which we now have are almost exact copies of the original documents, how do we know that the persons who wrote them were the prophets, apostles, and men who wrote under the direction of the apostles? Tradition tells us that these men wrote the documents. Is this true?

We have traced the New Testament text back to the second century within a generation of the time when the apostles were living, and find no reason to doubt that it is substantially the text which came from the hands of the original writers. Who were those original writers? Tradition and internal evidence of each of the books of the New Testament give us the names of the authors of all the books except the Epistle to the Hebrews. We can follow the tradition back to the beginning of the second century; it was everywhere the same. The works of other writers, Christian and non-Christian, universally attribute these documents to the men who are said to have written them. Internal evidence supports the belief. We shall have more to say about this later, but now we want to point out one thing. Would it have been possible for the writers of the New Testament books, if they were forgers, to have deceived the Christian Church of that time into thinking that the books came from the traditional authors? We can only answer emphatically: "No!" Remember that these books *must* have been written within the generation of men who knew the apostles. There were such men in all the churches, and can it be said that they would not have examined the evidence carefully as to whether the apostles did actually write the books, if these books were brought to light after the death of the authors? Not only would they have known about the things spoken of in the books themselves, but they would have known whether the authors could have written them or not. The fact that at that early date there was no question in the mind of anyone as to their authorship is strong proof that the books were written by the men who are said to have written them.

This argument is very important, for most of the books were written, not to individuals, but to churches, and intended for circulation among the churches. If they were not circulated among the churches during the lifetime of the apostles who wrote them, but were forged later, the question would immediately have arisen as to why they had not been known about before in the churches to which they were directed. On account of the general character of the writings themselves, a forgery would have been impossible either during the lifetime of the apostles or within a generation or two after their death. By internal and external evidence, the documents must all be dated in the first century, so they could not have been forged after that time. We are therefore forced to the conclusion that the traditional authorship of the various books was correct. This argument supports both the truth of the documents and the traditional authorship of the books.

In regard to the authorship of the books of the *Old Testament*, we must make a different argument. The whole question of whether the various books of the Old Testament were or were not forgeries will be discussed later, but here we present the strongest argument for the traditional authorship. We have shown that we have the same Old Testament used by Christ and the apostles, a fact no one today, even among higher critical scholars, really doubts. If that is the case, then the Old Testament with its traditional authorship must either be true or Christ and the apostles were liars! Christ and His apostles claimed to have supernatural knowledge or revelation, or to be supernaturally inspired while writing the facts. At the same time they placed their stamp of approval on the traditional authorship. If they were mistaken about this, they were liars about their supernatural claims! The whole question of the truth and traditional authorship of the Old Testament then rests directly on the question of the deity of Christ. If one is disproved, the other, logically at least, falls to the ground. There are independent grounds for believing in the deity of Christ, as will be shown later, and if he was divine then what he said about the Old Testament was true. We will continue to show in the following chapter that the Old Testament is true, that it is historical, that it cannot be shown *not* to have been written at the time it is said to have been written, and that there is no really trustworthy evidence to show that it could *not* have been written by the men who are said to have written it. We must rest our case for the traditional authorship upon our belief in the deity of Christ. If this is rejected, then we cannot prove that Moses wrote

the Pentateuch, or that the other writers wrote the books they are said to have written. On the other hand, the history and truth of the Old Testament stands and would stand no matter who wrote the different books. As we have already said, there is no evidence to show that the traditional authors of the Old Testament did not write or could not have written the Old Testament. This fact supports our faith in the deity of Christ, and, as we will show in a later chapter, a Christian cannot doubt that Christ is the divine Son of God, and our Saviour, because he rose from the dead.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Higher Critical Attacks on the Old Testament

During the past two hundred years there have occurred a number of attacks against the historicity of the Old Testament, most of them based on what is called "higher criticism." Higher criticism usually has a bad connotation to one who believes in the historicity of the Bible, but the name may refer to critical defenses of the Bible as well as to attacks upon it. The name is primarily used in contrast to "lower criticism," which is the criticism of the text itself of the Bible with a view to establishing the text as it was composed by the original writers. Higher criticism is the study of the documents with a view to ascertaining their age, character, authorship, sources, simple or composite nature, and historical value. If such criticism proceeds on a Christian basis, and endeavors to treat the documents with perfect fairness, it can perform a vital and absolutely necessary service in the realm of historical knowledge and in the realm of Christianity. But if the scientist has a naturalistic bias, and starts to examine the documents with certain unfounded assumptions, his conclusions can take him only as far as his assumptions will allow. His presuppositions will color every investigation which he undertakes and make dependable conclusions well-nigh impossible. The naturalistic assumptions of the higher critic have affected textual criticism, and, as Edward Hills says,¹ it is now impossible effectively to separate higher and lower criticism, for naturalistic bias will inevitably slant conclusions about the text.

¹ Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 61.

The charge which we bring against the destructive critics is that, whereas they claim to be following only legitimate historical methods, in reality their presuppositions render a fair conclusion extremely difficult, if not impossible.

B. Presuppositions of Destructive Criticism

1. *Naturalism*. In a previous chapter we have already pointed out the fact that naturalism is entirely unwarranted as a presupposition.² It is the assumption that nothing could have happened in the past which does not happen in the present. As has been shown, it amounts to a denial of a personal God, and to a denial of God's power to intervene in the affairs of men and nature, or at least it denies the fact of such intervention. To assume the principle of naturalism without facing the arguments for theism is unfair, and before the critic proceeds on that basis, he should at least give notice to his readers that he is making such an assumption, and acknowledge the necessity of proving his premise before asking others to accept his conclusions. Many "mediating" critics who accept the results of destructive criticism either in whole or in part but seek to reconcile those results with belief in the teachings and facts of the Bible claim not to proceed on a naturalistic principle, but it is difficult to see how results arrived at on naturalistic principles can be accepted by anyone without the greatest danger of unconsciously accepting the premise as well, or at least without danger of being overpersuaded by the very impressiveness of the arguments themselves which are based on a naturalistic premise.

2. *The principle of development or evolution*. This principle is assumed by every destructive or mediating critic without exception, and it is an assumption which we claim no one has any right to make. We do not here refer to organic evolution, though usually those who assume evolution in religion also believe in organic evolution. We do not deny that there is development of various kinds in the Old Testament. This is a question to be decided upon the merits of the evidence from the Old Testament itself, and not upon the assumption that everything connected with the Old Testament, including the idea of God, has necessarily undergone a process of development. The latter assumption is a curious mixture of naturalism and the general theory of evolution, applied to religion. To state it baldly, it runs somewhat as follows: Everything in the universe is the result of a process of

² See Chapter V.

evolution; all religion is therefore included in the process of evolution. Religion must have started with the lowest forms of animism and fetish worship, it is said, and evolved through a long process to polytheism (the worship of many gods), to henotheism (the worship of only one local god), and at last to the monotheism of late Judaism, the whole process being one of man's development and seeking after God or the higher religious principle, and at last reaching the religious conception of one God, the creator of all things. If this assumption is true, then of course the account of a religion *revealed* by God, *not* a religion *evolved* by man's groping after and at last finding God, as the assumption involves, *must be wrong*. The history of the earlier books of the Bible must then be either a conscious or an unconscious projection of the idea of later Judaism into the dim and hazy past, cast in historical form though written late in Jewish history. With this assumption as a starting point the critic then proceeds to take this pseudo-history to pieces, show various signs that he says indicate late date, and recast the whole thing in harmony with his premises. He declares that *nothing* in that whole history could have happened in the way the Bible says it happened, for the Bible says the Hebrew religion came *from* God, while his premise says the Hebrew religion was an evolution *to* God. He must therefore search carefully through the Old Testament documents for anything which will support his theory and allow him, with some show of reason, to put a late date on portions contradicting his theory, so that they will harmonize with his notion of the evolution of religion. Now no critic will admit that this is what he does, but a candid examination of the writings of the chief critics of this school of thought will convince one that this is what they unconsciously do over and over again. Often a passage is declared to be of late date simply because it contains indications of a fully developed priesthood, and a complicated ritual, or because it contains the idea of God or revelation which is incompatible with their theory of what ought to have been held at an earlier date. That is, of course, assuming the thing to be proved, namely, that such ideas of God, revelation, and religious ritual must have been developed late in the history of Israel!

Now what we claim is this: No one has a right to make this assumption without proving (a) that all religion has undergone such a process of evolution, or (b) that God *cannot* found a religion on a different basis, a non-developmental basis, even though other religions may have gone through such a process, or (c) if it be admitted that He *could*

found a religion by revelation if He wanted to, that Hebrew religion was *not* a religion founded in a way different from the way other religions developed.

No one has a right to assume that Judaism was a development type of religion and then, using the assumption as a premise, date all passages which contradict it at a time late in the history of the nation. This is argument in a circle of the most vicious kind. To put it in the form of a syllogism: All religion has evolved. Judaism is a religion. Therefore Judaism has evolved from a lower to the higher form of worship and religious concepts. The Bible as it stands contradicts this idea; therefore the Bible is wrong and must be recast to conform to what the development theory demands. Changing the order of the documents will make it show development, so the Bible order must be corrected.

The evolution of religious ideas is the thing to be proved. But it cannot be assumed that the Bible is wrong because it does not teach that Judaism evolved.

3. *Bible conflicts with other assumed evidence.* The following assumption is constantly made and has no warrant: When there is apparent conflict between the Bible and other evidence from external sources, the external source must be right and the Bible wrong! The external source is accepted even when we know that it is untrustworthy. Again and again archaeological evidence has turned up to show that the Bible is right. We must remember that the Bible is *evidence*, trustworthy evidence, proved so repeatedly. When there is an apparent contradiction between the Bible and external evidence, we have a right to proceed on the assumption that the Bible is right and not that the external evidence must be right.

4. *Contradictory interpretations of the Bible text.* Another assumption often made is that when there are two possible interpretations of the Bible text, one of which would bring the Bible into conflict with external evidence or show a contradiction between two passages in the Bible itself, while the other interpretation of the same passage would remove all conflict or contradiction, the interpretation which *produces* the conflict or contradiction *must* be right. Certainly a book which is trustworthy in other respects deserves the benefit of the doubt in such a case, or at least it deserves to have the decision reserved until more evidence can be brought to light.

5. *Overriding value of the opinion of a scholar.* A fifth assumption,

worse in many respects than the others, is that a mere *opinion* of a scholar is to be accepted against the *positive* evidence of the Bible documents, even though that opinion may be ungrounded in actual historical and linguistic evidence bearing on the point in question! The opinion of *no* man unsupported by evidence is worth the paper it is written on. No matter how great an expert a man may be in linguistic and archaeological fields, his opinion against the Scriptures is worth nothing unless he backs it with evidence. The Bible itself *is* evidence, and an opinion against it based on nothing but anti-theistic or evolutionary premises, with no direct evidence in its support, has no value.

These are a few of the assumptions which are constantly made by the destructive critics, and against which we must be constantly on our guard. They are assumptions which no one has any right to make, but which have done much to lend a specious plausibility to the arguments of the destructive critics. Let us now take up briefly the attacks themselves.

C. Brief History of Destructive Higher Criticism

1. *Astruc*. Destructive higher criticism of the Bible began with a French physician named Astruc, who, in 1753, called attention to the fact that in some sections of Genesis the name "Elohim" was used for God while in other sections the name was "Jehovah." He tried to account for this by saying that it represented the combination of two documents into the Book of Genesis.

2. *Eichhorn*. Eichhorn in 1779 pointed out the fact that certain characteristics of style could be traced in the portions which used the different divine names. Later critics carried this division through the whole Pentateuch and into the Book of Joshua, calling the six books the "Hexateuch."

3. *De Wette*. De Wette in 1806 assigned the bulk of Deuteronomy to the time of Josiah in the seventh century before Christ, on the ground of alleged peculiarities of style and contents, and distinguished a second "Elohism" document which he called the Annalistic, but which later writers called "P." De Wette thus distinguished four main documents in the Hexateuch: Deuteronomy, denoted by the symbol "D," the two Elohist documents which in later time became known as "P" and "E," and the Jehovist document, represented by the symbol "J." Other writers went still farther, no two agreeing among themselves, denoting

them by "E¹," "E²," "J¹," "J²," etc. It was claimed that the different documents were combined at different times by different unknown persons, whom the critics called "redactors" and denoted by the symbols "R," "R¹," "R²," etc. For example, one critic assigns forty-seven passages in Genesis to redactors.

4. *Order of the Documents.* In the period before the development of what is called the "Graf-Wellhausen Hypothesis" the order of the main documents was as follows: "P," the principal Elohist, supposed to have been written first (though this document was not then called "P"); "E," the second Elohist, written sometime later; "J," the Jehovistic document, supposed to be largely legendary in character; and lastly "D," the Book of Deuteronomy, supposed to have been written in the time of Josiah. This was the order usually accepted by the critics down to the year 1866, when Graf published his essay on "The Historical Books of the Old Testament."

5. *Graf and his followers.* The publication of this essay marked the introduction of what is known as the "Modern View" of the construction of the Old Testament. Graf claimed that the legal portion of what was later called "P," instead of being the oldest, as was heretofore supposed, was in reality the *youngest* document of the Pentateuch.

Kuenen, a professor at Leyden University, accepted Graf's claim but added the statement that the *whole* document "P," historical as well as legal parts, was written last. Thus he reversed the order in which the documents were previously thought to have been written! The theory was popularized by Wellhausen in the *History of Israel*, written in 1878, and since that time, through the writings of Driver, Cornhill, Bacon and others, it has almost conquered the critical world on both sides of the Atlantic.

The order of the alleged documents as they stand in the Graf-Wellhausen scheme is as follows: "J," a prophetic document supposed to have been written about the ninth century B.C. in Judea, the Southern Kingdom, is now considered to be the *oldest*, though formerly thought next to the youngest. "E," the remainder of the old Elohist document after the first Elohist has been removed, is supposed to have been produced in the Northern Kingdom of the ten tribes, under some prophetic influence at about the eighth century B.C. These two documents are alleged to have been combined a century or so later by a redactor, "R," into one document, "JE." In the time of Josiah, Deuteronomy, "D," is supposed to have been written, while the Priestly Code,

"P," the old Elohist which was formerly put *first*, is now placed *last*, and dated after the exile, in the time of Ezra and his associates. In this division "J" is composed of most of the passages in the first four books which use the name "Jehovah." "E" is composed of the portions of the Pentateuch left after "P" is taken out and includes the parts where "Elohim" is used after "P" is segregated. "D" includes most of Deuteronomy and much of Joshua. "P" includes most of Leviticus (except Lev. 17 to 26, the "Holiness Code," called "H," which is attributed to Ezekiel and dated about 600 B.C.), Numbers, and parts of Joshua. (Part of Numbers goes to "J" and "E," and a little of Deuteronomy to "JE.")

6. *Later books.* The division did not stop with the Hexateuch. It was soon seen that some of the other books of the Old Testament presupposed the Pentateuch as already in existence when they were written, so of course it was necessary to date them accordingly. Judges was dated after the time of Josiah, while some of the prophets like Isaiah were divided into a dozen different documents dating from 750 B.C. to 300 B.C. The tendency of the critics was to deny predictive prophecy and date the prophets accordingly. The whole result of the critics' labors was to discredit the authorship and date traditionally assigned to most of the Old Testament books.

D. Evidence upon Which the Documents Are Segregated and Dated Late in History

We must now consider briefly the evidence upon which the whole hypothesis is based.

As has already been pointed out, *Astruc* called attention to the fact that certain sections of Genesis use "Jehovah" while others sections use "Elohim," when speaking of God. Exodus 6:3 says that God was not known to Abraham by the name "Jehovah," and the assumption is that men previous to Moses' time did not know God as "Jehovah." As a matter of fact, in the Book of Genesis we find men, as in the days of Enosh (Gen. 4:26), beginning to call on the name of Jehovah. To account for this discrepancy, *Astruc* and his successors said that different documents were combined to make the Book of Genesis.

A second line of evidence was the numerous passages throughout the Pentateuch which the critics said *could not have been written by Moses*. Deuteronomy 34, the account of the death of Moses, could hardly have been written by Moses except as prophecy. Exodus 16:35 refers to the cessation of the manna after the death of Moses and could hardly have

been written by him. Other similar passages were pointed out and used to show that the Pentateuch must have been written by someone after the death of Moses.

Certain *narrative discrepancies* were pointed out and claimed to be the marks of different writers; they were also cited to prove the late date of one of the passages containing them. Examples will be given when this point is discussed later.

Doublets, or alleged duplicate passages such as Genesis 1 and 2, and 16 and 21, were said to show that two documents were combined here.

The principal basis for the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis was found in the fact that there seems to be a *difference in the kind and complexity between the laws found in different codes of the Pentateuch*. The Code of the Covenant is said to represent legislation suitable for a nomad people; the Code of Deuteronomy is said to represent legislation suitable for a people during the period of the kingdom; and the so-called Priestly Code, in Leviticus and Numbers, is said to represent legislation suitable for a highly developed priesthood such as could have existed only in the time of the Second Temple, in the days of Ezra. This alleged evidence forms the basis for the method of dating the documents. Discrepancies between the different laws also prove, it is said, that the laws were written at different periods.

Certain peculiarities of *style* and *grammar* were noted and the documents divided accordingly, and one of the principal grounds for dating the different documents late was that they were said to contain words which would not have been used earlier. A word, for example, which could clearly be shown to be of American origin, found in a Chinese document, would prove the document to be later than the eighteenth century, for America never came in contact with China before that time. A document containing the words "nuclear physics" could not have been written before work began on the atomic bomb. It was claimed that there were similar words found in the different books of the Old Testament which proved that the books containing them were written late in the history of the Hebrew people.

E. Examination of Alleged Evidence for the Graf-Wellhausen Theory

Before beginning a detailed examination of this hypothesis and the alleged evidence supporting it, we want to call attention to two important facts. First, the order of the dating of documents is a reversal of the order assumed by previous critics! This fact is admitted by all.

Certainly one may look with suspicion upon the alleged internal evidence for the late date of a document when the critics for nearly a hundred years of close examination of the Hexateuch put the date of "P," for example, at one period, and then critics for the next hundred years place the same document at an entirely different period. "P," formerly thought to be the earliest document, is now declared to be the latest! Is not this strong evidence that there is no conclusive proof of the lateness of composition within a document itself, as the critics claim? Is it not a strong indication that the critics' theory is really based on subjective opinions rather than on the Bible itself?

Second, the whole process of destructive higher criticism of the reigning school is based on the assumptions previously mentioned. The principle of the evolution of everything in the universe is assumed to be true and then applied to the Bible documents, making the evidence suit the theory! This is a serious charge to make, but what else can we say when critics date the laws of Leviticus in the time of Ezra because they are thought to represent too developed a condition of things to have been written before the Second Temple was built? Granting for the moment that they do show such a condition as the critics' views assume, would that prove that the laws were written after the Second Temple was built? Not at all, for could not God make regulations for a later period and give them to Moses to incorporate in a book for the future use of the people if He so desired? God might have seen in advance what the people would need at the later time and given it to Moses in the wilderness.

Moreover, the fact that there was a well-developed priesthood in the time of Ezra does not prove that it was the *first* developed priesthood in Israel! All the arguments based on the supposition that the condition of things shown in the laws of the Pentateuch is too advanced and complicated for the times for which they are said to have been written, according to the books themselves, assume the very thing to be proved, namely, that the situation in the time of Moses was as simple and lacking in complexity as the critics say it was! The Bible says that the laws were written in the time of Moses, and the critics must present other evidence to show that they were not written then before their argument about complexity can have any weight. Needless to say, they have not produced such evidence, while archaeology has abundantly shown that such a complex condition among the Israelites as is represented could very well have existed in the time of Moses.

We cannot discuss in full all the arguments of the critics. That task has been ably done by Dr. Robert Dick Wilson in various articles in the *Princeton Theological Review*, particularly in a series in the April and July numbers of this magazine in 1919, in an article in the April, 1925, issue, and others, and in *Studies in the Book of Daniel*. It was also discussed by W. H. Green in *Unity of Genesis* and *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*; by W. J. Beecher in *Reasonable Biblical Criticism*, by A. H. Finn in *Unity of the Pentateuch*; by Harold Wiener, Orr, and others in various articles in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; by Edouard Naville in an article in the July, 1924, *Princeton Theological Review*; by Edward J. Young in *An Introduction to the Old Testament*; and in the books of Dr. Oswald Allis, formerly of Westminster Theological Seminary. In fact a large number of competent scholars have thoroughly investigated the subject of Old Testament criticism from all angles and completely refuted the arguments of the destructive critics. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the complete Book of Isaiah destroys the idea of two Isaiahs, for the book is a unit in this scroll.

1. *Astruc's clue*. Here it is our purpose only to touch on some of the typical arguments of the destructive critics. First, let us consider Astruc's "clue" and see whether it offers a fair basis for separating the Pentateuch into various documents.

Exodus 6:3 says: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as 'El Shaddai' (God Almighty); but by my name 'Jehovah' I was not known to them." This is the clue, and it is supposed that by taking out all the passages which use the word "Jehovah," and those which use the word "El," or "Elohim," we can separate the Book of Genesis into two documents.

At this point we must call attention to an important fact. Most of the arguments for the critical theory are based on the present Masoretic Text. They do not take into account the knowledge which textual criticism has brought to bear on the problem. According to Wiener,³ in cases where divine appellations are used in Genesis, there are variant readings in a large number of instances of the use of the different terms, and many of the best attested readings would directly contradict the theory according to which the documents have been separated. When the passages are separated according to the theory, even without

³ Wiener, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1st ed., p. 2302.

the changes which might be made by textual criticism, the resulting documents are the most curious hodgepodge! Verses are cut in two in some cases, for no other reason than that the theory demands it; words and phrases are separated in such a way as to make nonsense in both documents. The context is rent apart, and when the documents are read separately they can be forced to read consecutively only by the most arbitrary methods. When we test the method in other ways we find, for example, that a passage which cannot be later than the time of Abraham is dated in the time of the kingdom, and similar discrepancies. Certainly there must be something wrong with the theory and method when such results are produced.

But let us consider the "Clue" itself. A well-attested reading of Exodus 6:3 has "I was not made known" in place of "I was not known."⁴ In this case the meaning would be that God did not reveal His redemptive attributes signified by the name "Jehovah" to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but revealed Himself as a God of power only. Thus "Jehovah" might have been known to them as a name, but God's nature as a God of *redemption* was not known.

Professor Naville calls attention to the important point that the word "Elohim" was a general one for the idea of a god, while each people had a particular name for their god.⁵ Jehovah had revealed Himself to the Israelites as the God of the whole earth and had told them that His proper title was "Jehovah." However, when Israelites were speaking to people of other races, as such people would not know about whom they were talking if they used the word "Jehovah," they had to use "Elohim," or its equivalent in the language in which they were speaking, in order to make themselves understood. Thus Joseph when he spoke to Potiphar's wife said: "How should I sin against Elohim?" for she would not have known the word "Jehovah," the particular name of God known to the Hebrews. The other verses of the chapter say that Jehovah was with Joseph, again using the word in a natural sense. If this point is remembered there will be no difficulty whatever in the uses of the words "Elohim" and "Jehovah" in their proper places in the Pentateuch, and the fact that some passages used "Jehovah" and others "Elohim" is no indication that there were two documents in such places, but simply that each name was used in its

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ In *Princeton Theological Review*, July, 1924, pp. 353 ff.

proper circumstances. It is easily possible, then, to reconcile Exodus 6:3 with the facts as found in the Book of Genesis; as a clue for separating different documents it is a failure.

Another equally possible explanation of the presence of the name in the Book of Genesis, in harmony with the passage in Exodus, is in the fact that the book was supposed to have been written *after* God revealed Himself as Jehovah, in His redemptive characteristics and by the special name He wished the Hebrews to call Him in distinction from the false gods of other nations. In that case, since Moses knew God as Jehovah, and since Moses himself was the author or historian of the facts recorded in the Book of Genesis, he had a right to use the names "Elohim" and "Jehovah" each with the significance which his revelation, received from God, enabled him to place upon them, in the proper places in the document he was writing.

Since God was the same God, whether he was called Jehovah or Elohim, Moses was within his rights in using the title "Jehovah," even though we were to admit that the patriarchs themselves never used that name. Moses could make the proper changes in the sources he was following in writing the book in accordance with the knowledge which he had received of the redemptive name "Jehovah" as representing God's dealings with His chosen people. The name "Elohim" was then used as the name for God when God's relationships to other nations of the world were mentioned.

One more point in this connection. Let us remember that in a division of this kind we get out of all the documents exactly what we put into them. If we separate all passages containing the name "Jehovah," we perforce get a document which contains *only* the name "Jehovah." By the same process we could separate almost any document written unquestionably by one author into two distinct documents, and by putting various nouns and verbs out of their context, supplying subjects or predicates where necessary, we could make fairly consecutive separate documents, plausibly arguing that they were the work of different authors when we know positively that they were written by the same man. The fact, therefore, that it is possible to separate the Bible documents in this way proves nothing except that it can be done. It in no way proves that they were not originally by the same author. Other evidence must be adduced to prove that point.

2. *Passages which it is said that Moses could not have written.* But what shall we say of the passages which, it is charged, Moses could not

have written? Do these prove that Moses was not the author of the books as a whole? Certainly not! Even though we were to admit that Moses did not write them as prophecy, their presence in no way proves that he was not the author of the books as a whole. In case the difficulty in these passages is not removed by proper textual criticism, it is perfectly consistent with attributing the authorship to Moses to suppose that Joshua or Phinehas acted as the posthumous editor of Moses' writings and brought the narrative up to date, at the time of the editing, by including the account of the death of Moses. At least, according to the narrative itself, this account was either written by Moses as a prophecy or revealed to someone else (as was probably the case), for no one was with Moses when he died and was buried! As for the epitaph at the close of Deuteronomy, this could easily have been added by Joshua, for we know that Joshua was himself a prophet and what he wrote would have equal authority with what Moses wrote. Even if it was inserted later it would not militate against Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole, in face of the large number of passages in the books themselves which say that Moses wrote them. The doctrine of inspiration does not hold that the copyists were inspired; if they made small insertions in the text, to bring it historically up to date to the time of copying, it would in no wise affect the trustworthiness of the documents as a whole since such interpolations can be easily isolated. Nor would such insertions affect the claim that the whole work was the work of Moses.

Moreover, the claim for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch could not be overthrown by proving that different scribes wrote at Moses' dictation, so that only a very small portion was by the actual hand of Moses. If he dictated either the words or the thought and left the actual drafting of the documents to the scribe, it might explain small differences in style in various places, without affecting the fact that it was Moses' work as a whole. If he dictated it either by actual word or by giving the thought to the scribe and leaving the actual words to the choice of the scribe, it would still be his work, especially if he read and corrected the manuscript.

3. *Narrative discrepancies.* In regard to these discrepancies, there are several things to be said. In the first place, a large number of them disappear when textual criticism is applied and more probable readings are accepted in place of the Masoretic Text. Others disappear if we change the vowel letters of the Masoretic Text (which we are at perfect

liberty to do, since the vowel letters are not inspired). In the case of a few passages, all discrepancies can be removed by transposing the passage in question to another part of the narrative. It seems logical to do this if we do not change the text in any way, for the passage may have gotten out of place when the clay tablets upon which the Penta-teuch was probably written were transcribed into the Old Hebrew script, or at some later time when the different manuscripts were copied. At any rate it seems logical to transpose the passage when the meaning can be cleared up in this way. For example, Numbers should probably be transposed as follows: Numbers 12; 20:1; 20:14-21; 21:1-3; 13; 14; 16; 17; 18; 20:2-13; 20:22a; 21:4b-9; etc. By this process a difficult passage can be cleared up without altering the text itself in the slightest.⁶ Another passage might be transposed as follows: Genesis 20 should be inserted after Genesis 12:8; it seems out of place after Genesis 19 since Sarah was so old at the time of Isaac's conception that she would not be beautiful in the sight of Abimelech. The only real objection to this transposition is that in Genesis 20 the name of Abraham was not Abram as in Genesis 12. This, however, can be explained as a copyist's correction after Chapters 19, 20, 21 had become the accepted order.

At any rate, we must remember that narrative discrepancies and various alleged contradictions between certain laws, etc., are not new discoveries. Even granting that they are not copyists' corruptions, but were in the original documents (which we will not admit), they in no way can be urged as a reason for dating the documents at a late date, for is it reasonable to suppose that a forger in the time of Josiah⁷ or Ezra would be so careful about weaving his forgeries together, as he must have been if the critical theory were true, and then be careless enough to leave contradictions in it? If he left them, would the various redactors who, according to the critics, revised the documents again and again have left the contradictions in? If there are real contradictions in the text, certainly it does not help matters any to attribute them to a forger, nor does their presence prove that the work which contains them was the work of a forger.

The books which Ezra is supposed to have written contain Persian

⁶ Wiener, *op. cit.*, p. 2302.

⁷ Cyrus H. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Testament Times*, p. 238: "The view that the scroll [of Deuteronomy] was forged shortly before its alleged discovery in 621 B.C. is based on false premises."

words as we would expect them to, if they were written in the Persian period according to the traditional dating. The "P" document, which is supposed to have been forged by Ezra, or in the time of Ezra, according to the critics, does not contain *a single Persian word*! Are we to suppose that a forger would be so careful about his style as to have written in such a way and then to assume that he accidentally left contradictions in his completed work?

Contradictions might prove the text to be corrupt, or if there were enough of them they might conceivably make the whole book untrustworthy, but their presence certainly would not prove that the book containing them was the work of a forger, when that forger would have had to be so accurate and precise in other respects! Later we shall take up a few typical contradictions and discrepancies alleged by the critics and show that they can be interpreted and understood so as to remove all difficulties, but at this time we wish to point out that such contradictions, if real, cannot be used as an argument either for the late date of the documents or to prove that the documents which contain them are forgeries.

4. *Doublets*. At first sight doublets may seem to indicate separate documentary sources. But when we examine these duplicate passages we find that they prove nothing of the kind. For example, Genesis 1 and 2, when examined closely prove to be accounts of different events. Genesis 1 tells of the creation of the universe, while Genesis 2 is an account of the creation of man and his environment and is not in any sense a parallel account. Genesis 2:4 is simply a recapitulation and summary of Chapter 1.

The account of Hagar's flight into the wilderness in Genesis 16 proves to be entirely different from the account in Genesis 21. In other passages, where laws are repeated for emphasis, or where a paragraph sums up a longer account, it is unfair to charge that they show evidence of separate documents. Repeating for emphasis is a common literary practice, and nothing is more common in literature than giving a summary before going on with a narrative. Almost any literary or historical work shows similar characteristics.

Summaries may be accounted for in another way. They may be titles placed at the beginning of clay tablets which have afterward crept into the text itself. At any rate they do not indicate separate documents, late dates, or the fact that the documents which contain them are forgeries.

5. *The law codes of the Pentateuch*. The critics charge that there are

four distinct codes of laws in the last four books of the Pentateuch—the Code of the Covenant (“E”), Deuteronomy (“D”), the Law of Holiness (“H”), and the Priestly Code (“P”)—and that they represent different stages of development in the history of the Israelitish religion.

The critics say that “E” represents the law as it was prior to 700 B.C., “D” a law code written about 621 B.C., “H” a law written about 600 B.C., and “P” a law code written about the time of the return from exile. As we have already pointed out, the *real* reason for this order is because their evolutionary theory of religion demands that the laws show such development, but of course no critic would admit it. The reason *they* give for dating the codes in this way is that they are said to contain incongruous legislation which they charge could not have been made in the time of Moses and represents the different stages of the development of the Jehovah religion.

The direct evidence of the documents themselves is against the critics’ claim, so they must show that these laws are “a series of forgeries, extending over a period of about 500 years, committed by more than seventeen different persons, all reformers with the highest ethical standards and all devoted to the service of Jehovah, the God of truth. Besides, *mirabile dictu*, the forgeries were all successful in that prophets, priests, Levites, kings and people were all alike induced to receive them as genuine and adopt them as obligatory, as soon as they were made known to them. The Jews and the Samaritans, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the Rabbis, Aristaeas, Josephus, Philo, Christ and the Apostles, all accepted the combined work as of real Mosaic authorship.”⁸ Notice that the Mosaic authorship of the laws was accepted by the Samaritans, who were at enmity with the Jews at the time when the Priestly Code is supposed to have been completed, in about 450 B.C. If they were ignorant of this code until it was finished about that time, would they have been likely to accept such a work as a genuine work of Moses, when it was presented as such by an enemy? It is possible to imagine that a skillful forger might impose on the people once without being discovered, but to suppose that seventeen, working over a period of 500 years, should have been uniformly successful is more than ordinary credulity can accept. The very law of probability is against such a supposition.

The superscription of these laws ascribes them to Moses, with the

⁸ Robert Dick Wilson, “Scientific Bible Criticism,” in *Princeton Theological Review*, April, 1919, p. 204.

proper place and date affixed to each group of laws. The form, subject matter, and treatment of the laws support the claim that Moses was the author, as Dr. R. D. Wilson showed conclusively in the article quoted above. The laws themselves are of such a character that they indicate a single great originator, for it is easy to see how a man like Moses, as a monotheist, with a people in need of just such legislation and with God to guide him, could have produced such legislation. But it is extremely difficult to see how a succession of little men, with minds bent on deceit, could have produced such a work of high ethical character and adapted to the alleged historical situation so skillfully as these men must have done if the Pentateuch was made that way. Moreover, if they were competent enough to commit such a forgery so well, how does it happen that they left the incongruities which the critics allege are in the laws? If they were obvious incongruities, the various alleged forgers were bound to remove them, and if they are *not* incongruities which cannot be explained away, then they do not offer sufficient evidence to prove the documents to be forgeries!

Now we claim that there is a perfectly simple explanation for the alleged incongruities in the documents written in Moses' time. In the first place, the so-called incongruities are grossly exaggerated. Is it reasonable to think that the scribes and Pharisees, who prided themselves on fulfilling the very letter of the law, would not have noticed and commented upon them if they really existed? Why did not the people upon whom they were first tried out by the forgers point out these incongruities and demand an explanation for them? The answer is almost too obvious to mention: there actually were no irreconcilable incongruities there! In the second place, bear in mind the circumstances and the people to whom each set of laws was addressed. The people had just come out of Egypt, where they had been living under a settled government with laws well established. What laws now were to govern them? How were they to conduct themselves in the ordinary relationships of life? What civil laws were to control them in the lands they expected to enter? Is it not perfectly evident that the first thing they needed was a set of laws to guide them in their ordinary relationships of life?

And when we examine the Code of the Covenant, that is exactly what we find—a set of laws to control the ordinary relationships of life. First comes, as we would naturally expect, the constitution which is to be the basis of their whole national life: the Ten Commandments.

Then follow directions for worship and for altars. After this comes a set of ordinances covering the ordinary relationships of life, about slaves, injuries between man and man, by beast to beast, thefts, and property. Then follow moral laws concerning the profaning of Jehovah's name, avoidance of oppression, offering of first fruits, and dealing with injustice and unbrotherliness. Then come laws concerning festal occasions and warning against wrong practices in sacrifice, and a closing promise of God's presence with them.

What would be or could be more natural than a set of laws like these, under just such conditions as prevailed at that time? Could anything be better suited for the people's immediate needs? Moreover, why should we expect God *not* to give them laws which they could use when they reached Palestine? They were expecting to enter Palestine in the near future; why should God give them laws which they could use only in the wilderness? The critics say in one breath that the laws concerning flocks show a pastoral state and in the next that the presence of laws for agriculture indicates an agricultural state in a settled land; but could not God give them laws for the agricultural state they were about to enter as well as give them laws for their present pastoral state? Or even on a naturalistic hypothesis, could not Moses have done so himself with all his background of training and education? The critics say that the absence of laws for priests in this code indicates the absence of priests and therefore denotes a period long before the development of the priesthood. Certainly there were no laws for priests because there were as yet no priests! But the absence of such laws does not indicate a long interval of time which the critics say must have elapsed between the Code of the Covenant and the Priestly Code! The laws are for the ordinary relationships of life, and from an *a priori* point of view, if we did not have the record of the Pentateuch before us, it would be impossible to affirm that there was no priesthood in existence at the time these laws were given, since they deal with entirely different subjects from that of priests. As a matter of fact, however, we know from the record that there were no priests at this time and laws for them at this point would be an anachronism. Their absence no more indicates a date in the time of Saul than the presence of laws for the priests in the Priestly Code of Leviticus indicates a time after the exile. If the priesthood *was* established in the wilderness, the laws are in place then as well as after the exile. The Bible says there was such a priesthood established in the wilderness, and even on the naturalistic premise of the critics, Moses had sufficient knowledge of priests in Egypt to be

able to originate laws and establish such an order in the wilderness! Remember, too, that Moses married the daughter of the priest of Midian! If he had a revelation from God, how much easier it would have been to originate the order of priests while there in the wilderness! The statement that the priesthood was established by Moses in the wilderness is before us. Can the critics prove there was no priesthood then? Certainly from the knowledge of priesthoods in Egypt and Babylonia which we now have it cannot any longer be *assumed* that the priesthood could not have been set up among the Hebrews then.

6. *The remaining codes of the Law.* As we take up the remaining laws of the Pentateuch, notice the fact that they all fit exactly into the historical setting of the period. If this is a forgery, then it is historical art of the highest kind, and we can never excuse forgers so clever in other respects for not removing incongruities which the critics allege are in these documents. The representation of the Pentateuch is that Jehovah had led the Israelites out of Egypt, and that they were to be peculiarly His people. What then could be more natural than that, after giving the people a set of laws to govern their everyday relations and worship, He should give Moses directions for building the tabernacle where Jehovah was to dwell openly with the people and give them the great object lesson of redemption? And what more natural than that, after giving directions about the tabernacle and its furniture, he should give directions about the consecration of the priest, since that priest was to be the symbol of the Great High Priest who was to take away the sins of the world?

The rest of Exodus with its description of the tabernacle is the most natural account of what would be expected under the circumstances. In the first part of Leviticus comes a set of laws to go with the service of the tabernacle, followed by the consecration of the priests and their duties and portions. Then come the very greatly needed laws about clean and unclean animals, the purification of women, leprosy, ceremonial uncleanness, followed by the great ritual of the Annual Day of Atonement.

After that comes the Holiness Code, a set of practical laws for making His people a holy nation. In Numbers, after the narrative section, the Levites are set apart for the service of the sanctuary, and their duties are those of acting as *bearers of the tabernacle and its vessels!*

Let us pause a moment to point out an incongruity in the critics' own theory. Why should the writer of "P" take the trouble to invent a service for the Levites in post-exilic times, which they would never then

be able to carry out? According to their theory the Priestly Code was invented to help bolster and establish securely the priestly clan, but if that was the case, a set of laws like these would have exactly the opposite effect of showing the people how useless the office of the Levites was! This is clearly for the use of the tabernacle and its furnishings during the period of the desert wanderings and for then only. It fits into the period of the desert wanderings and would never fit into any scheme of post-exilic authorship of these tabernacle sections!

But to resume the summary of the Law. The following sections of the laws in Numbers, after the sections concerning the Levites, have to do with trespass, jealousy, Nazarites, priestly blessings, oblation of princes, the seven lamps of the sanctuary, purification of the Levites (Notice that while the Levites are purified, they are not consecrated as priests, a fact which is directly against the dating of this passage after the exile). Then come laws concerning the keeping of the Passover, narrative sections, laws of offerings, Sabbath-breaking, more narrative sections, duties of priests and Levites, priests' portions, Levites' tithes, purification of the unclean, narrative sections, inheritance laws, laws of various offerings, laws concerning vows, other narrative sections, law concerning murder, and law concerning marriage of heiresses.

In this hasty summary it is to be noted that a large number of these laws concern the priests and Levites and the duties which fall to them. A large portion of the remainder concerns things which the priests must teach the people, and in which the priest has some concern. Many of the laws are given upon the occasion of some need, as, for example, the inheritance laws for women. The whole narrative and the interwoven laws fit together perfectly, and the laws are just such as we would expect a people to have under similar circumstances. Dr. R. D. Wilson points out that in both Egypt and Babylonia there were many similar laws, except the laws relating to the priesthood and the tabernacle, and these purport to be unique, the property of a Jehovah-worshiping people. The strange part of it is that the tabernacle resembles Egyptian buildings, and the priesthood uses Egyptian names for different articles, such as their linen, etc., yet the "P" document of which this is a part is supposed to have been forged in Babylon at a time when Babylon was an enemy of Egypt! Nothing could indicate the absurdity of the whole critical theory better than this.

Deuteronomy, the last book of laws, is really a book of orations, which purport to give a summary of the things Jehovah has done for Israel and a rehearsal of the important laws. There are some changes and

additions to make them suitable for the new conditions which they would face when they had a land of their own. We would naturally expect repetitions of previous laws in a document such as this, for the people to whom the orations were addressed were a new generation of Israelites, most of whom had not heard the first laws when they were originally promulgated at Sinai. Thus repetition was the only thing possible in such a speech to such a people, and that is what we actually find in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Now as we review these laws, there are several things to be said. First, during the forty years in the wilderness there is room for progression in the laws. Changing conditions demanded new laws, and Jehovah and Moses gave them as the occasion required. When they were ready to enter the Promised Land, and Moses was about to leave them, he gave them a number of new laws suitable for the new conditions in which they would be, and any seeming incongruities are due to the fact that changing conditions demanded different laws. What right has a critic to say that Deuteronomy must be dated in the time of the kings because laws for kings are mentioned? If *God* supervised the giving of these laws, could He not reveal a law in advance of the time when it would be needed? If God exists He can produce prophecies, and a critic who doubts it should produce external evidence to prove that the laws relating to kings are not in their proper place in the history.

These things constitute the center of the critics' attacks. First, there could not be laws about the tabernacle because there was no tabernacle before Solomon's temple was built, say the critics! But if there *was* a tabernacle from the time of Moses onward, as the Bible says, it takes more than a critic's denial to overthrow the evidence.

Second, in regard to the repetition of laws proving a different date of composition: almost any book of literature repeats over and over things which it wants to impress on the minds of the readers. The Koran repeats time and time again, far more than the Pentateuch does, yet no one charges it with being the work of more than one man. Moreover, as was pointed out above, the repetition in portions like Deuteronomy was absolutely necessary in the circumstances.

Third, in regard to contradictions, if we examine the laws carefully we find that they refer to different phases of a case, and the things which seem to be contradictions are really laws which treat of the same thing under different circumstances—for example, the laws concerning slaves; the laws differ because the slaves were of different classes.

These things have all been treated so thoroughly by many different scholars that anyone wishing to pursue the subject further should consult articles such as those previously referred to, and articles in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* under the headings "Sanctuary," "Tabernacle," "Pentateuch," "Priests," "Criticism," etc., where the arguments of the critics have been treated and thoroughly refuted in detail.

7. *Style, grammar, and vocabulary.*

a. *Style:* The critics urge that certain distinct forms of expression, traceable in different parts of the Pentateuch, indicate different authors for the parts. Now in the first place, no one denies that Moses used various source documents in the preparation of the Book of Genesis. Indeed, there is every probability that this history was handed down in written clay tablets carried by Abraham from Babylonia and transmitted to his descendants down to the time of Moses. Evidence for this point will be mentioned later. Now if he did use sources, we have no way of showing that he did not take over some of the characteristics of their style as well. Perhaps he merely combined different sections into the running narrative of Genesis and corrected the errors if there were any in the sources. In that case the style would be the same. This does not militate in any way against the Mosaic authorship of the book, any more than a similar use of sources indicates that modern historians did not write the works attributed to them. The Holy Spirit so guided him that he did not include error in his completed document.

Another point not to be forgotten is that authors are constantly varying their style as the type of work which they are writing demands. Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" and "Past and Present" have totally different styles. The style of many of Browning's poems is very different from that of others; compare, for example, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" with "Paracelsus." When authors collaborate in the writing of any book it is usually impossible to separate the parts on the basis of style and grammar. For example, Nordhoff and Hall wrote *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Who can disentangle the authorship? Style is so subjective a subject that it offers little proof one way or another. Differences in style in the Pentateuch are far more imaginary than real, and what differences there are, are amply accounted for by differences in subject matter, which would naturally demand a different vocabulary and phraseology. Moreover, if Moses allowed scribes to do most of the work, as he probably did, and only exercised supervision over the whole

thing, correcting the finished manuscripts, it is easy to see how variations in style might result. But even if he did all the actual work himself, certainly he had a right to change his style, as modern authors do, when the subject matter was changed or the circumstances were altered. Orations like Deuteronomy and history like the first part of Exodus demand different styles. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in the sense in which we have explained it can never be successfully challenged on the ground of differences in style.

b. *Grammar*: Here we are on less subjective ground. If it could be shown that the Pentateuch or any part of any book contained grammatical expressions and forms which were not in use at the time the book was said to have been written, there might be strong argument against the early date of the book. Even then the evidence would be doubtful, for the silence of other literature would not prove that the author in question at the time might not have used the form in question. If other evidence proved that he *did* write the book when it was said to have been written, that would show that he actually *did* use the disputed form, and the silence of other literature would not prove that he could *not* have used the form.

Now most of the charges on this subject were made by critics many decades ago. Dr. R. D. Wilson in the article quoted above ("Scientific Bible Criticism") shows conclusively that at that time it was not possible to write a history of the Hebrew language because the evidence was not available. Since then abundant evidence has come to light proving that all the charges of the critics of several decades ago were unfounded. For example, it was charged that Ecclesiastes could not have been written by Solomon because the use of abstract formations in *-ûth*, *-ôn*, and *-ân* proved a late date for the book. We now know that *-ûth* was common to the Babylonian, Aramaic, and Hebrew and is found thirteen times in the Code of Hammurabi, dating from about 2200 B.C.⁹ Moreover, it is found in all the books which the critics date early, and *not* in some of the books of the Bible which they date late! In the same way Dr. Wilson has shown that the critics' contentions about the endings *-ôn* and *-ân* are mistaken. These forms, too, are old enough to have been used in any book in the Old Testament according to the traditional dating. Dr. Wilson has thoroughly examined the other charges along the line of grammar and found not a single instance in which the critics' contentions can be sustained by the evidence we now have.

⁹ *Ibid.*, July, 1919, p. 402.

c. *Vocabulary*: Here again we are on solid ground. If the critics could show that a word found in the Pentateuch, for example, was taken from the language of a country which never came in contact with the Hebrews until centuries after the time when the book was supposed to have been written, it would offer good evidence that at least that part of the book was not as old as it purported to be. If many such examples could be found, there would certainly be a strong presumption against the traditional date of the book. The critics charge that because certain of the books or documents of the Old Testament contain words found nowhere else except in the New Hebrew of the Talmud, the documents are of late date. Before taking up other charges let us consider this one in detail.

(1) *Presence of New Hebrew words in the Old Testament*. At first sight this seems like a plausible argument. But when we think about it, does it not assume the very thing to be proved? If the Old Testament words are *really* old, the words in question *are* found elsewhere than in the Talmud. Inasmuch as the other Hebrew literature from the period when the Old Testament is supposed to have been written is extremely meager, how can it be said that the presence of a word in the Old Testament which is found elsewhere only in the Talmud indicates the late date of the Old Testament? May we not suggest that, inasmuch as the writers of the Talmud constantly used and quoted from the Old Testament, they might have gotten the words they use from the Old Testament, rather than that the Old Testament writers got their words from the Hebrew of the period of the composition of the Talmud?

But lest this seem to be dodging the question, let us present the evidence which Dr. Wilson collected on this subject. After compiling concordances of all the words used only five times or less in the Old Testament, special concordances for each book in the Old Testament, and for the different documents of the critics, "J," "E," "D," "H," and "P," for each part of the Psalter and the alleged late sections of the other books in the Old Testament, he also compiled concordances of words of this kind found in Aramaic and Hebrew of post-Biblical writers. As a result of this investigation, he discovered that words occurring five times or less in the Old Testament and elsewhere only in the Talmud are found in almost every book and section included in the different documents of the critics in the Old Testament. Further, while the percentage of such words found in the Talmud and also in "J" was 44.4 per cent, in "E" 48.7 per cent, in "D" 53.2 per cent, and in "H" 50 per cent, the percentage of such words found in the Talmud and also

in "P," the latest of the documents according to the critics, which they date after the exile, was only 3.1 per cent! According to the critics' reasoning about New Hebrew words, "P" ought to be the earliest or one of the earliest documents in the Old Testament if paucity of words found elsewhere only in the Talmud prove anything! Not only so, but the other documents and books which the critics date late showed a similar surprising paucity of such words! Psalm 79, which the critics date as one of the latest Psalms, long after the exile, has not a single word of this class! All of which proves that there is absolutely nothing to the critics' claim on this point.¹⁰

(2) *Alleged Aramaisms*. Another charge of the critics is that the presence of Aramaic words in a document shows the lateness of the document. In order to support this charge the critics must prove first that the word alleged to be Aramaic is really Aramaic, and second that if the word is really Aramaic why its presence in the Hebrew document shows the lateness of the document. According to Dr. Wilson,¹¹ Kautsch, the great Hebrew and Aramaic scholar, said that there are probably 360 Aramaic words in the Old Testament. Of these, 75 are found in old Babylonian documents. For example, Wellhausen alleged that the Hebrew word "to subdue," in the first chapter of Genesis, was Aramaic, and the inference was that therefore the first chapter of Genesis was written late in Hebrew history. This very word, however, is found in Babylonian documents contemporary with Hammurabi, and so could have entered the Hebrew language at any time from the time of Abraham onward.

Now in the first place it is very difficult to prove a word to be Aramaic just because it is found once or twice in the Old Testament and is also found in Aramaic. The word may be a Hebraism in Aramaic, instead of an Aramaism in Hebrew. Wellhausen alleged that the word "rule over" found in the first chapter of Genesis was an Aramaism in the Hebrew Bible. This word is found in only one place in all the extant literature of the Aramaic dialects and in that place is a translation of a passage from Leviticus!

In the second place, even if a word can be shown to be an Aramaism, that does not prove it to be late. The Hebrews were in touch with Aramaic-speaking people from the time of Abraham down to the end of Hebrew history, and Aramaic words may have come into the Hebrew language at any time during this period. In the article quoted

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, April, 1925, p. 254.

above, Dr. Wilson shows conclusively that out of 360 words alleged to be Aramaisms only 50 have any apparent ground for so being considered, and these 50 all come from parts of the Bible where the authors were in close touch with the Arameans. To charge that such documents are late because they contain Aramaic words is to ignore the historical circumstances under which they are supposed to have been written.

In the last place, there are Aramaic words in those parts of the Bible which the critics themselves date early as well as in the documents which they date late, so their whole charge that the presence of Aramaic words indicates a late date for the document containing them falls completely to the ground. The charge which Kautsch makes to the effect that the Aramaic words were interpolated in the documents dated early is absolutely ridiculous because there is no evidence whatever of such interpolation. The whole argument is thus seen to be a specious one.

(3) *Persian words in the Old Testament.* Persian words are found in Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah, all books which ostensibly were written during the Persian period. But they are not found in any of the other books or documents which the critics date in the Persian period.¹² Even the Priestly Code has no Persian words, and probably no Aramaic words! Is not this extremely good evidence that these sections of the Old Testament were not written when the critics charge they were written, in Persian times?

(4) *Greek words in Daniel.* There are three words in Daniel, all names of musical instruments, which can be shown to be Greek. Dr. Wilson has ably shown that these words might have crept into use in Babylonia through commerce, through the presence of Greek slave girls who were sold as musicians all through the East, or through the Greek mercenaries who served in the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt and elsewhere at the time when Daniel is supposed to have been written. At any rate, their presence in Daniel does not prove that it was written in 165 B.C.

II. FOREIGN WORDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ATTEST THEIR TRADITIONAL DATES

We come now to one of the strongest proofs that the Old Testament books were written when they are said to have been written. This is in the presence throughout the Old Testament, in the proper place

¹² Robert Dick Wilson, *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* p. 27.

corresponding to the period of contact with the different countries, of words from these foreign lands. This argument, or portions of it, has been given by Dr. Wilson in various articles in the *Princeton Theological Review* and elsewhere but as a whole it has not as yet been authoritatively published, though Dr. Wilson delivered it in substantially the following form as a lecture in various parts of the United States and the Orient. We shall summarize it as he has presented it at various times in his lectures and articles.¹³

The literature of every country shows the various foreign influences which have been brought to bear upon the country in the past, through the foreign words embedded in the language.¹⁴ For example, in the fifth century the Anglo-Saxons conquered England and were converted to Christianity by Latin priests. Anglo-Saxon literature of the period before the Norman Conquest is full of Latin words. After the Norman Conquest, Norman-French was spoken in England, and the literature of the period shows the corresponding influx of Norman-French words. In the time of John Milton a great revival of classical learning swept over Europe, and Milton's works are full of Latin and Greek words, with Italian words included also. Carlyle was a great student of the German language, and his works are full of German words. In fact we can tell in what period of English literature almost any great English document belongs by the kind of foreign words it contains.

This is true of any literature. The Korean language, for instance, today is full of English words, especially since American troops have been stationed in South Korea. If we wanted to date a Korean document containing English words, we would know that it must have been written after Korea came into contact with English-speaking people. The *absence* of a foreign word in a document would not necessarily prove that the word was not spoken in that country at that time, but the *presence* of any foreign word conclusively proves that the document containing it could not have been written *before* that particular foreign country came in contact with the language in question unless the word was interpolated. There are some words that enable us to date a document even more closely. Any document which contained the words "hydrogen bomb" or its equivalent would have the date fixed after A.D. 1950.

Now when we take up the Bible we expect to find foreign words in the different books corresponding to the period of history in which

¹³ Wilson, *Princeton Theological Review*, July, 1919, p. 442.

¹⁴ Wilson, "Babylonian and the Bible," in *ibid.*, 1902.

each was supposed to have been written; if the book was genuine, it *could* not contain words which came in only at a later period. If the critics' arguments about the lateness of the "P" document were right, we might expect to find Persian words, which would be excellent evidence that the document was not written by Moses, unless it could be shown that such words were probably interpolated. But when we examine the "P" document we find it has not a single Persian word!

In the first part of Genesis in the period from the creation to the time of Abraham, since Abraham came out of Babylonia, we might expect to find Babylonian words and proper names. And indeed the early chapters of the Book of Genesis are full of Babylonian words and the proper names of Abraham's history are all paralleled in form, character, and meaning in the Babylonian of Hammurabi's time. We might account for the Babylonian words of the first chapter of Genesis by supposing that it was written after the exile, as the critics claim, but how can we account for the Babylonian words in the second chapter if the critics' claims are right, for the critics date this chapter in the eighth century B.C. in Palestine, when there was no Babylonian influence?

Since Moses is supposed to have written Genesis we might expect it to include a few Egyptian words, and we do find the Egyptian word for "kind" in the account of creation. In the part of Genesis from the time of Joseph to the end, when the Hebrew people were in Egypt and just coming out of Egypt, and in Exodus and the other books of the Pentateuch, we would expect more Egyptian words, and there we find them in abundance. How can the critics account for the fact that the word for "linen" used for the priests' garments in the alleged "P" document is an *Egyptian* word, when this passage is supposed to have been written in Babylon, out of reach of Egyptian influences?

During the third period, from Joshua onward, we would expect no foreign words in the Bible documents, for the language of Palestine was Hebrew, and the Moabites and Phoenicians all spoke Hebrew. Since there were Philistines along the seacoast, however, and since the Israelites were continually at war with them, one of their words might enter the documents of this period. There is one word which is probably Philistine in the Book of Joshua, but no other foreign words are found in the documents of this period.

During the next period of Old Testament history, under the rule of David and Solomon, the territory between Egypt and the Euphrates

was conquered by the Hebrews. The Aramaic and Hittite languages were spoken in this region. Correspondingly, Aramaic and Hittite words are encountered in the writings supposed to come from this period. The word "paradise," formerly presumed to be a Persian word, is now thought to be a Hittite word, from the fact that it is found only in Armenian, and the Armenians were closely allied to the Hittites.¹⁵ As Solomon had commerce with India and Spain, we might expect to find foreign names of articles of commerce. The Sanscrit words "apes," "peacocks," and "elephant" are found in the literature of this period.

The next period, down to the fall of Jerusalem, was one in which the Hebrews came again into contact with Assyria, Egypt and Babylonia. In the literature of the period we find the Assyrian word for "governor" and various Assyrian proper names. From the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of Cyrus Babylonian words occur in the Book of Daniel.

As has already been stated, the books supposed to have been written during the Persian period contain Persian words, and *no other book has Persian words in it!*

Except the three names of musical instruments above mentioned, there are no Greek words in the Old Testament. Is not this the strongest kind of evidence that no Old Testament books were written in Greek times?

Thus the foreign words in the Bible all support the traditional dating of the books and are directly against the arguments of the critics for the late dating of the different documents. There are no Persian or Greek words in the Psalms, though the critics date most of them in post-exilic times. The second, third, and fourth chapters of Genesis, dated by the critics in the period of the early kingdom, have more Babylonian words than the first chapter, which the critics date in the period of the exile in Babylon! How can we account for such things except by saying that the Bible is correct and the critics wrong?

¹⁵ Edward Meyer, "Armenians and Hittites." in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION. HIGHER CRITICAL ATTACKS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

During the period when the higher critical attacks were being made upon the Old Testament, the New Testament was likewise under fire. Naturally one of the principal results of the attempt to discredit the Old Testament as history was that belief in the authority and deity of Jesus Christ, who placed his stamp of approval upon the Old Testament, was being undermined and the historicity of many parts of the New Testament seriously called into question. The critics of the New Testament, like those of the Old, began to seek literary and historical grounds for rejecting the supernaturalism in the New Testament and in Christianity.

II. PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE CRITICS

As in the case of the Old Testament, so in the criticism of the New Testament the critics usually have two basic presuppositions: the *evolutionary concept of the origin of religion* and the *naturalistic interpretation* of Scripture.

A. *The Evolutionary Concept of the Origin of Religion*

Believing that religion, like everything else in the universe, is the product of evolutionary processes, the critic holds that revealed religion such as the Old Testament pictures is impossible. All religion, he asserts, began with naturalism and developed into polytheism, then into henotheism, and finally into monotheism. Mankind evolved from

the lower animals, he declares, but, in the struggle upward through the ages, developed more and more godlike characteristics, until at last mankind developed into Jesus Christ, the highest type of humanity. In him, Jesus, the human super-man, were developed godlike qualities, so that he became the pinnacle of the evolution of the race. His divinity consists in his being not the unique Son of God, the God-man, as the Bible teaches, but simply the highest point in the evolution of the divine essence present in every man! This of course would be pantheism, and it would be unfair to charge all the destructive critics with being pantheists, though many of the modern liberals who are willing to assert their belief in the divinity of Christ accept this position. Probably most of the Neo-Orthodox theologians would oppose pantheism.

Many of the higher critics of the negative school, however, simply say that Jesus was a man, the best man who ever lived, but nevertheless just a man, in whom the innate possibilities of the human race evolved to the highest point of development.

This assumption of evolution is just a presupposition and has no historical foundation either in the Bible or elsewhere. If a critic, however, proceeds on such a basis, his historical investigations can produce only one result: an evolved religion, with Jesus as the apex of evolution. With this assumption there is no possibility of arriving at the revealed religion of the Bible. Inescapably it must be concluded that the Bible is historically untrustworthy. His problem, then, is to account for the picture of the true Christ, the God-man, presented in the New Testament.

B. *The Naturalistic Interpretation of Scripture*

The twin assumption of the destructive critics *in toto* is that of *naturalism*. While the assumption of evolution affects principally the religion of the Old Testament, the assumption of naturalism affects particularly the New Testament, because every page of the New Testament teaches *supernaturalism*.

Since the universe seems to be governed by unchangeable natural laws, it is assumed that such a thing as a miracle is impossible. Any record, therefore, which contains the account of miracles or other supernatural intervention must, *per se*, be inaccurate and need reconstruction, say these critics. That is to say, such a record can be accepted as historical only after all the supernatural elements have been

eliminated. Now, as we saw in Chapter V, the assumption that nothing could have happened in the past which does not happen today would be valid only in case there were no transcendent, personal God. If the universe is governed, not by the Triune God, but by blind, immutable, eternal forces, then of course what happens today becomes the measure of what has happened in the past; and if miracles do not occur today, then no miracle could have occurred, as Hume declared, *no matter what the strength of the evidence in its support may be!* Or if our idea of God is such as to limit His nature to that of impersonal spirit, as do the pantheists, or of personal spirit bound by His own self-constituted secondary causes, so that He must always and invariably act in the same way, then of course miracle is impossible, and supernatural elements in the New Testament must be eliminated as untrue.

But if a personal, transcendent, rational, all-powerful, just and merciful, Triune God exists, then no one can logically deny the possibility of supernatural intervention in the universe, if such is included in His plan and purpose. In this case the actuality of divine revelation, miracle or prophecy, becomes simply a historical question of fact. Has evidence been produced to show that miracles have occurred? The Bible is such a record of supernatural intervention in the world and must be considered historical evidence. If upon careful investigation it seems to be reliable evidence, then miracles must be accepted as matters of fact, and their non-occurrence today must be explained as being due to the purpose of God.

Now the assumption of naturalism, in New Testament criticism, dodges the whole question of whether the above kind of God exists. Before naturalism can have a valid hearing in the court of religious opinion, the deniers of supernaturalism should show that the Christian's Triune God does not exist. To say that miracles are incredible is simply to say that a transcendent personal God does not exist, or that He cannot or will not intervene in the universe to perform a miracle. We have already pointed out in Chapter V that if there was the purpose of attesting revelation, and if the object of giving the revelation was the redemption of God's people, a miracle would be the most natural thing in the world. Thus supernaturalism, far from being unnatural or unreasonable, is in reality the one thing that makes the Bible what it is, the inspired Word of God.

When critics assume naturalism, then, in their investigation of the historical and literary phenomena of the New Testament, the only

possible result is to rule out all supernaturalism from the Bible. Children are not born of only one parent today, so the Virgin Birth of Christ is impossible. Dead bodies decaying in the grave three days do not come to life at present; therefore the bodily resurrection of Christ must be *spiritually* interpreted or denied. Since gravitation always pulls matter together, it was impossible that Christ actually walked on the surface of the Sea of Galilee. And so on throughout the whole New Testament. All such things are ruled out, not because the evidence for their occurrence is faulty or unreliable, but simply because the naturalistic presupposition of the critic denies the possibility of their occurrence. Though the critics do not put the matter thus baldly at the present time, a careful examination of their writings convinces one that this is their position.

The critic's problem, then, in dealing with the New Testament, is to account for the presence of the supernaturalism in the New Testament and to dig through the stratum of supernaturalistic history to the *real* Jesus (who of course was *only* a man) whom the early Christians knew and give us a reconstructed history of the New Testament with supernaturalism left out. If the whole history is rejected, then the problem is to find a plausible source or sources for the ideas of Christianity and account for its origin outside the Bible. We shall presently see that this is a failure, but first let us trace the growth and development of higher criticism of the New Testament.

III. THE HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

Destructive criticism of the New Testament began seriously with the deistic writers, one of whom was Voltaire, in 1767. Men like Reimarus denied the supernaturalism of the Bible and tried to put natural religion in place of Christianity. However, it was not until D. F. Strauss published his *Leben Jesu* in 1835 that a scientific attempt on literary and historical grounds was made to discredit the historicity of the New Testament.

A. Strauss' "Mythical Theory"

Strauss' theory was that most of the history of Christ was the result of *unconscious exaggeration* by devoted disciples, put into writing at a later date and accepted as historical by the church of the second and third centuries, because the church of that period had already accepted

the supernaturalistic elements of the gospel history which had gradually crept into the gospel stories. According to Strauss there were present in the minds of the disciples and early Christians all the hopes and expectations of a coming supernatural Messiah prevalent in the Jewish nation. As the disciples came to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, they viewed him through the rosy spectacles of the Jewish supernaturalistic Messianic ideas, and out of their belief in his Messiahship gradually grew up the stories of the miracles. Thus the Jesus of the Gospels was the result of the process by which the Jesus of history was unconsciously transformed by the Christian faith of the early apostolic community into the divine God-man, Jesus Christ. Or, to put it succinctly, "the Jesus of the Gospels is the product of the Christian faith."

The difficulty of this view of the origin of Christianity is that it does not explain how the Christian community could possibly have identified a merely human Jesus with the supernatural Being whom they were expecting to come, unless there was a real basis in the historical Jesus for such identification. It is all very well to say that the Jesus of history gradually became transformed into the supernaturalistic Jesus of the Christian faith so that the gospel records were written under the spell of the Messianic idea, but where did the Christian faith itself spring from? If there was no element of supernaturalism either in the teaching of Jesus or in his life and work, how could the disciples of Jesus ever have identified him with the Jewish supernatural Messiah?

Another fatal defect of the theory was that the primary documents of the New Testament are now dated by destructive critics themselves well inside the first century, within the lifetime of men who knew Christ and were familiar with the historical facts of the period, so that there was no opportunity for the gradual development of supernaturalistic myths over a long period of time, such as the theory necessitates.

B. The Tübingen Critics; F. C. Baur

Strauss' mythical theory was acutely criticized not only by orthodox scholars but by naturalistic critics who followed him. The criticisms of F. C. Baur and the writers of the Tübingen school undermined the theory, until today it has been abandoned by critics of whatever shade of belief. Baur and his followers said that the Gospels arose in the second century as a result of an attempt to reconstruct Gospel history

(*by conscious exaggeration*) to correspond to the type of Christianity then present in the Old Catholic Church (as the Christian Church of the second and third centuries was called). According to Baur, early church history was marked by an intense struggle between Paul and the other apostles, and between Gentile Christianity represented by Paul, and Jewish Christianity represented by Peter, James, and the other apostles. The result was the compromise form of Christianity of the Old Catholic Church, with Paulinism largely triumphant. At the conclusion of the struggle between the two factions, the Gospels were written as *conscious fiction*, in an attempt to make the history of Jesus and the Apostolic Church correspond with the theological ideas of the church of the second century. Baur accepted as genuine the four major epistles of Paul, and particularly from Galatians and First Corinthians he built up the fiction of the struggle in the early Christian Church.

The theory of these Tübingen critics has been discredited for many years and is rejected by all modern destructive critics, for the following reasons: (1) A closer study of the sources discloses the fact that the struggle was not between Paul and the other apostles, but between all the apostles, on the one side, and the sect of the Judaizers against whom Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, on the other. (2) This theory was discredited in the second place because Jewish Christianity largely disappeared as an important phase of the church life after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (3) In dating all the primary documents of the New Testament well within the first century, long before the development of the Old Catholic Church of the second century, Baur's theory has been made absolutely untenable.

C. Liberalism

Baur was the first of the so-called "Liberal" theologians. These men accepted much of the Gospel history as historical and believed that there was a person named Jesus of Nazareth who actually lived and taught in Palestine. They separated sharply, however, between the theological Jesus of Paul and John, for both of whom Jesus was the God-man, and the merely human figure which, they said, is found in the true history of the Synoptic Gospels (as the first three Gospels are called). They rejected all the supernaturalism in the gospel history and, by historical and later by literary criticism, attempted to get at a merely human Jesus back of the divine Jesus of the narratives. They

sought to solve the problem of how the Gospel narratives assumed their present form, as well as how the supernaturalistic elements crept into the narratives.

The real founder of modern religious Liberalism was A. Ritschl. After his death Harnack forcefully upheld the Ritschlian theory, which conquered the theological world of Germany and America, and held almost undisputed sway until the rise of Neo-Orthodoxy. The few brilliant radical critics never gained many theological followers. Liberalism is now abandoned by most German and negative critics of other nationalities.

Ritschl proved conclusively that there was no such conflict in the early Christian Church as Baur postulated, and that the disappearance of most of Jewish Christianity before the close of the first century prevented the conflict, had there been a real one, from having any effect on the Old Catholic Church of the second century. The study of patristics led the Ritschlians, such as Harnack, to see the necessity of dating most of the New Testament documents within the first century, for the writings of the patristic period show the New Testament documents fully established and accepted in the church, as coming from the traditional authors, early in the second century.

Ritschlian theology emphasized Christian experience as the basis of doctrine and, because it regarded the Gospel narratives as so largely untrustworthy, claimed that our Christian religion rests on Christian experience rather than on historical facts. Its philosophical basis was largely pragmatic and agnostic, claiming that while we do not have rational proof that God exists, we must postulate His existence for the benefit of humanity, whether He exists or not. Christ, according to the Ritschlians, while not actually God in the sense commonly accepted, is the highest and best person whom we know of here on earth and has the "value of God" to us, so that we may worship and treat him as God and affirm his deity. However, to the Ritschlian, the Christ of the Christian does not depend upon the writings of the New Testament but upon what we may know of him directly in Christian experience, as he reveals himself in the individual soul. (We can discern here where Karl Barth got his idea of revelation.) To the Liberal, Christ is the name for what we experience of God. We can have this vital experience of Christ even though literary and historical research should take away entirely the Christ of history. In the words of H. E. Fosdick, the *value* of the Bible is in its *reproducible experiences*, rather

than in the doctrinal categories of thought in which those permanent abiding experiences are clothed from time to time.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Ritschlian system lies in the fact that Christianity is peculiarly a *factual religion*. It rests on the question as to whether certain events which are said to have happened in Palestine over nineteen hundred years ago actually happened or not. If it is true that the Eternal Son of God came to earth and lived and died on the cross as an atonement for my sins, and in my place, then I can rest my faith upon that knowledge and have a personal experience in Christian religion. As long as I believe those facts to be true, just so long can I have him as my Saviour and my Lord. It makes all the difference in the world to me whether there was a divine Jesus who died on the cross in my place and rose again on the third day, or not, for it is my eternal *salvation* that is at stake. If there was no such person or if that person was not divine, his death cannot save me. It is therefore a matter of life and death to me to know whether the facts of Gospel history are true.

Now as long as I believe that what the Bible teaches about redemption and life after death is *true*, just so long will those facts have *value* to me in Christian experience, and just so long can I have a Christian experience that is based on a belief in those facts. It is all very well to tell me that it is the *life* I live that counts. That may or may not be true, but one thing is certain, and that is that I will not continue to have the kind of life we call Christian if I cease to believe that the divine Christ of the Gospels is a living person today, able to change my life from evil to good. Indeed, if you convince me that those facts of the Gospel record are *false*, then my Christian experience will evaporate, or what I may call Christian experience will really be something entirely different. I may continue to use the name Christian, but my experience will cease to be *Christian*, for it will no longer be based on the historical Christ. There cannot be true Christianity without vital Christian living, but vital Christian living is produced because Christianity is *true*! It is of course conceivable that we may be mistaken in our belief in the truth of Christianity, and that my Christian experience is without foundation in historical fact, but once give me the idea that those historical facts around which the Christian religion centers are false, and that kind of Christian experience will disappear. If my Christianity is reduced to belief in the things which I can reproduce at the present time in my own experience, then that is a kind of religion, of course,

but it is not the Christian religion in the historical sense. Take away belief in the historical basis of Christianity, and it is to be greatly doubted whether even the attenuated form of religion left would long continue as a vital factor in my life.

The Christian religion as such rests on the truth or falsity of the facts of the New Testament, especially upon those facts which center around the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, who died to save me from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. If the world should ever become convinced that those facts are false, then Christianity as such would soon disappear from the face of the earth. A thing has value for us just so long as we believe it to be *true*, and when belief in its truth disappears, the value of the belief disappears with it. Imitation pearl necklaces sometimes resemble genuine pearls so closely that only an expert can tell the difference. A woman might be perfectly happy believing that her imitation pearl necklace was genuine, but convince her that it is an imitation and she will regard it as though it were mere window glass. A person might be convinced of the truth of Christianity and become a good Christian, but if he is convinced that Christianity is false, his reaction might be so violent that he would cast all restraint to the winds.

While the later tendency of Liberal theologians was to try to separate their belief in the reality of Christianity from their belief in the facts upon which the Christian religion rests, they, especially the older liberals, nevertheless tried to cling to all they could of the New Testament narratives, after literary and historical criticism had attempted to purge them of supernaturalism. They dismissed Paul as one who theologized about his own Christian experience and made it a norm for all other religious experience. They said that Paul's idea of redemption was never taught by Christ, tried to distinguish between the religion of Paul and his theology, and with the cry "Back to Christ" sought to get at the real Christ who was the first Christian in his attitude of love and reverence for God and feeling that all men were brothers. They claimed that Christ had been so obscured by the coating of deity with which the admiring evangelists clothed him in the Gospel records that it is now *very* difficult to get back to the real Christ.

The Gospel of John was rejected as a second-century production written after the idea of Christ's deity had conquered the whole church. Their attention was centered in the Synoptic Gospels, and after a

minute study of their interrelations and dependencies, they developed the idea that Mark was written first, and that the other two used Mark as their principal source, together with an otherwise unknown source which they called "Q." "Q" was made up largely of the sayings of Jesus. In addition to these two main sources, Matthew and Luke, or whoever wrote the books bearing their names, used other sources for the material peculiar to each, such as the visit of the Wise Men and the visit of the shepherds.¹ There are a number of inherent weaknesses in this theory, as was pointed out by B. C. Butler in *The Originality of Saint Matthew*. From a Christian point of view the chief objection is that it tacitly denies the apostolic authorship of the books. Why should the Apostle Matthew depend on another man, Mark, for the account of the work of Jesus when he himself was a witness? Why should Luke depend on Mark for facts which he himself had gotten in Palestine from eyewitnesses of Jesus' activities? Moreover, if Mark was recording the gospel as preached by Peter, how could Matthew and Luke feel at liberty to change the Gospel story by insertion of sayings which came from "Q"?

A truly Christian explanation of the Synoptic problem has been expounded by Edward F. Hills. While the oral-tradition explanation was not original with Hills, it is cogently expressed by him:

At the very beginning, while they were still dwelling together at Jerusalem, the inspired Apostles proclaimed to the Jews their testimony concerning the life and teaching of their Lord. This testimony was the Gospel, and in their proclamation of it the Apostles all agreed, not due to any artificial or forced effort toward that end but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. . . . Thus under the Holy Spirit's guidance a uniform oral Gospel was preached in all the churches of Christ throughout the world.

. . . The second phase was the recording of that story for the salvation of future generations through his penmen, the inspired Evangelists. Each Evangelist wrote his Gospel separately without any dependence on the work of others. . . . The agreement of these three Gospels with each other is . . . to be explained . . . from the fact that each Evangelist was moved by the Holy Spirit to record in writing a portion of that uniform oral Gospel which had already become familiar to the early Church everywhere through the preaching of inspired men. . . .

Under the inspiration of the Spirit the Apostle John remembered and wrote down certain discourses of the Lord which had not been suitable for

¹ The best exposition of this theory is by Streeter in *The Four Gospels*.

inclusion in the oral Gospel and so had not been preached by the Apostles during the days of their common sojourn at Jerusalem.²

In writing these Gospels each author was made to remember certain facts with which he was familiar, but which the others did not include in their Gospels.

The destructive critics did not stop with their two-document theory of the origin of the three Synoptic Gospels. Even after the discarding of John's Gospel the Jesus of the Synoptics is still the divine Jesus, so all references to his divinity and miracles must be cut out of them as "late interpolations." Accounts of the miracles were cut out for no other reason than that they were "incredible." The attempt was made to attain a Jesus who was purely and only a man.

D. Radicalism

But after the liberal critics had done their worst, two curious facts came to light, and a new school of "Radical" critics seized upon them, to the great embarrassment of the Liberals. The first fact was that even after the literary critics had excised all possible passages that taught supernaturalism, they had not gotten rid of the objectionable supernaturalism! Even such a passage as the Sermon on the Mount contained supernaturalism as part of its very warp and woof, and the Sermon on the Mount would be unintelligible except as coming from the Son of God, who felt that he had authority to legislate for the new dispensation, and who taught as one "having authority and not as the scribes." Supernaturalism is assumed and implied, and underlies the surface all through the Synoptic Gospels just as much as it is evident on the surface in the Gospel of John! In spite of all they could do, the Liberals were not getting rid of the divine Jesus, and the "Radicals," seeing this, began to insist that the whole Gospel record was unreliable and therefore should be discarded as a whole.

The second fact upon which the radicals seized was the fact that even though the Liberals should be successful in eliminating the divine Jesus from the Gospels, a purely human Jesus would not account for the founding of Christianity! A purely human Jesus could never, by any stretch of the imagination, have become the founder of the Christian Church! The Christian Church had always believed in a divine Jesus, and if it could not have gotten its belief from a Jesus who was

² Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 48-49.

truly divine, then it must have gotten its belief from some other source, and there was no longer any necessity for clinging to the Gospels as historical documents.

Indeed, one Radical critic, Arthur Drews, in *The Christ Myth*, went so far as to deny that such a person as Jesus ever existed. Startling as was this position when first propounded, its logic was very cogent. The Radicals are perfectly right in saying that a merely human Jesus could never have been the founder of the Christian Church, for the very essence of Christianity in the early church, at least, was the belief in a divine Jesus, and if that Jesus never existed, then the belief in a divine Jesus must have had another source. In that case, why hunt longer for the original human Jesus? Literary criticism was finding that there was no method of literary criticism by which the divine Jesus of the Gospels could be eliminated, and since naturalistic premises forbade belief in a divine Jesus, the only alternative was to discard the gospel record entirely.

1. *The difficulty of the Liberal position.* The Liberals were certainly in a difficult position, and one from which there were only three logical lines of escape. (a) They might give up their belief in a merely human Jesus and go back to the belief in a divine Jesus; or (b) they might take the way of the Radicals, and discard the whole Gospel narrative; or (c) they might continue to attempt the impossible task of trying to divorce Christian experience from the historical facts upon which it is grounded. Most of the Liberals chose the last method and preached the doctrine that Christian experience does not rest upon what may or may not have happened over nineteen hundred years ago, but rests upon the vital experience which every Christian may have of being in harmony and in direct fellowship with the infinite God. (This is the background, I believe, for the readiness with which most Liberals have embraced Neo-Orthodoxy.)

Plausible as such a course may seem to some, it cannot be denied that it is not historic Christianity, for it knows no Redeemer and exchanges the true gold of revealed truth for the tinsel of rationalism. It leaves man without a Saviour from sin, without heaven, without an Intercessor at the throne of grace, and clothes him in the threadbare rags of his own righteousness. It sends him through the gateway of death without the comfort there is in the knowledge of a loving Saviour waiting with outstretched arms to receive him, and leaves him the poor consolation of a pious hope of immortality, when loved ones descend into the

valley of the shadow. So much for the position of the modern Liberals who have cut loose from history and depend upon their shifting sands of personal righteousness and personal consciousness as a basis for their so-called Christian experience.

2. *Radical criticism: various Radical views.* The Radical critics, however, less sentimental than the Liberals about clinging to the labels of Christianity after the traditional meaning has gone out of them, followed the logic of the liberal position courageously to its conclusion and rejected the whole Gospel record as unhistorical. Said the Radicals, since it is impossible by literary methods to separate the true from the false in the New Testament documents, and since, even if the Liberals were successful in attaining to a merely human Jesus back of the divine New Testament Jesus, that Jesus could never have been the founder of the early Christian Church, we must give up the attempt to find the source of apostolic Christianity in the New Testament Christ and search elsewhere for its origins.

Some of these critics account for the Gospel documents by saying that they were the literary creations of the original writers; that is, that Jesus was not a historical character at all, but the imaginary hero of a fictitious tale! Others say that Jesus was not a historical character but was created by some writer to bolster his theological position. Others, not quite so radical, endeavor to retain a portion of the New Testament accounts of Jesus' life but deny his Messianic Consciousness, or his sanity. Still others make his Messianic Consciousness the key to his whole life and say that Jesus was so under the influence of the Jewish apocalyptic, eschatological ideas that he expected the kingdom of God to come while he was still alive, was bitterly disappointed when forced to give up that hope, and so, to conceal his disappointment, originated the idea of his future coming on the clouds of heaven. Some say that Christianity was derived from pre-Christian Judaism and that Paul simply adopted the Jewish conception of a heavenly Messiah and centered it about the person of Christ. Others say that Paul and the early Christian Church got their ideas from the "mystery religions" of the Greek-Roman world, or from Persian and other myths.

3. *Machen's refutation of the Radical position.* It is not possible to enter into any extended discussion of the various strange developments of the Radical criticism of the New Testament. The whole subject has been thoroughly discussed by Dr. J. G. Machen in *The Origin of*

Paul's Religion and the contentions of the critics have been completely refuted.³ The objections to these fantastic explanations of the origin of Christianity are insurmountable. The Radicals can reach their conclusions only by ignoring all the evidence in support of the historicity of the Bible documents and discarding all the recognized principles of historical research, as far as the Bible is concerned. Their whole case rests upon the assumption of naturalism which each Radical critic makes, and if naturalism is overthrown, their positions collapse with it. It is a satisfaction to know, however, that even though we were to ignore their naturalistic assumptions, their position can be overthrown on their own premises.

Dr. Machen, in the above-mentioned book, has met them on their own ground and shown that, quite aside from naturalistic assumptions, the explanations which the Radical critics give of the origin of Christianity are inadequate to account for it. The ideas which are most distinctive of Christianity are not found at all in pre-Christian Judaism, or in the "mystery cults" of the pagan religions of New Testament times. The supposedly similar ideas which the critics point out in the pagan religions are, when examined closely, found to be lacking the features most distinctive of Christianity. For example, as Dr. Machen shows, the idea of a dying and rising god, which the Radical critics say was widely prevalent in the time of Paul, is in reality totally different from the New Testament account of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

a. The pagan idea was associated with the ceremonies of the cult, where every year the god was supposed to die and then be resuscitated. With the pagan mystery religions the god died every year with the seasons, probably symbolizing the death and resurrection of vegetation. Jesus died for his people *once for all!* Moreover, the god of the mystery religions did not die in behalf of or in place of the worshiper, as Paul represents Jesus doing. Thus when we examine the supposed analogy closely, the likeness disappears and the divergence both in language and in fact becomes most striking. Moreover, as Dr. Machen shows, there is no evidence that the mystery religions existed in the time of Paul in the form which the critics say is like Christianity.⁴ Even if there were an analogy between the two religions (which there is not), then it

³ J. G. Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, p. 173 to the end.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Chap. 6.

would not prove that Christianity got its ideas from the mystery religions. The latter might have gotten their ideas from Christianity! Or they might have arisen independently of each other! The facts which Paul and the other New Testament writers recorded might be true and actual history and still resemble those of other religions superficially.

b. It is impossible to show how the alleged pagan influences could have entered Paul's life and affected his teaching. Therefore the question of the truth of Christianity must be entirely separate from the question of whether there were any points of resemblance between Christianity and other religions. Another religion might parallel Christianity in every respect and yet be false! Needless to say, no other religion does parallel Christianity.

c. And lastly, even if the critics could show that similar pagan religions existed in the time of Paul, Paul's saying that the cross of Christ was foolishness to the Gentiles shows that the Gentiles did not recognize any similarity and that they were not especially familiar with the idea of a dying and rising god. It would not be at all likely, then, that Paul would even know of the existence of the pagan religions referred to, since their rites were secret, to say nothing of getting his ideas from them.

4. *The failure of Radicalism.* The Radical critics have completely failed to account adequately either for the origin of Christianity, or the origin of the New Testament documents. They have also failed to account for the source of the belief in a divine Jesus, in the resurrection, in the miracles, and in all the other supernatural elements in the faith of the early Christian community. Criticism of the Book of Acts by Sir William Ramsay, a conservative, and Harnack, a liberal, has attested the historical accuracy of the author of Acts, and the medical terms in both the Gospel of Luke and in Acts, as well as tradition, point to Luke as the author of both books. Even the Gospel of John is now dated by most critics at the end of the first century, and no good reason exists for denying its Johannine authorship. The deeper we go into the Gospel and apostolic history, the more evidence is discovered that it is accurate history there recorded, and the less reason is there for rejecting any parts of the documents themselves. Were it not for the naturalistic assumptions of the negative critics, the New Testament would long ago have been accepted as true.

IV. SUMMARY OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL CRITICISM

In conclusion let us sum up briefly the difficulties that confront both the Liberal and the Radical critics. In the first place, as the Radical critics have conclusively shown, it is impossible by any process of literary or historical criticism to get rid of the supernaturalistic elements of the Gospel and apostolic history. The only thing that remains is to discard the whole history, for even were the Liberals successful in getting rid of supernaturalism, a merely human Jesus could not have been the founder of the Apostolic Church. But if the New Testament accounts be discarded, the origin of Christianity must be explained in some way. There is no other way to explain the faith of the early Christians except to admit that the supernatural events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection actually occurred and were the foundation of the belief in their occurrence in the Christian Church.

The Radical critics have investigated every possible explanation and it has been shown that none is adequate. It is impossible to deny that Christianity started in the first half of the first century, and that it started, not by the assertion and proclamation of eternal truths of the reason, or a new way of righteous living, but by the assertion and proclamation of certain historical facts about the life, death, and resurrection of a person, who, the early Christians said, was known to all the Jews! If these facts were true, then the origin of Christianity is adequately accounted for, but if the facts were false, then there was ample opportunity to investigate and prove them so. A new religion based on new ideas of God or a new way of living may indeed be founded and gain converts after a time, but a religion which asserted as true certain facts and said that these facts were well known to the hearers could never even get started during the lifetime of the witnesses if the facts never occurred! "Does it not turn just on this—that the founders of other religions point out the way to God while Christ presents himself as the way?"⁵

This is the crucial point of difference between Christianity and other religions, as the quotation just given from Herman Bavinck shows,⁶ for

⁵ Benjamin Warfield, "Christless Christianity," in *Harvard Theological Review*, October, 1912.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

the founders of the other religions were the first followers of those religions, while Christ, instead of being the "first Christian," was the *heart and center of Christianity!* If the events of the New Testament history actually occurred, then we can account for the origin of Christianity and the New Testament documents, as well as the origin of the faith of the early Christian community, but if they did not occur, then the whole Christian movement is left hanging in the air, without any way of explaining its origin.

Destructive higher criticism of the New Testament, as well as of the Old Testament, today is bankrupt. It will be only a question of time before conservative scholarship will emerge triumphant and the Bible will be established more firmly than ever as the textbook of revealed religion and the history of redemption. Many souls have been led astray by destructive criticism, but there is one service which it has rendered the Church of Christ, for which we shall always be grateful: it has forced conservative scholars to investigate the foundations of the Christian faith and has established for all time the fact that that faith was built on the rock of true history, and that God *has* spoken to men in his Son through whom the worlds were made.

Probably the plight of both Liberalism and Radicalism has been one of the important factors in leading so many Modernists in America and elsewhere to accept with such enthusiasm the teachings of Neo-Orthodoxy.

V. BARTHIANISM OR NEO-ORTHODOXY

A. Barth's View of Revelation

It was the bankruptcy of Liberalism and Radicalism that led Karl Barth to put forth what is now called Neo-Orthodoxy. Barth accepted the so-called "assured" results of destructive higher criticism, but at the same time he could not help feeling that the prophets of the Old Testament somehow or other had a real revelation of the Sovereign God. The First World War had destroyed Barth's belief in Liberalism, which taught that man was getting better and better through the years. He had also become disillusioned with the Liberal teachers in the German universities. As he studied his Bible he found the same pessimistic view of the nature of man that he himself had come to hold. His solution of the problem was a comparatively new view of revelation. He held that "God's revelation is not of such a kind that it can be

contained or preserved in nature or in writing. Revelation is always an event, an encounter in which God speaks, on His own decision, and always, by God's act, accompanied by faith. It is 'clear in a flash and in the highest perfection and certainty.' It has no propositional content, so that it cannot be repeated, yet it always makes man aware that God is his Lord. Indeed, revelation *is* Jesus Christ: it is identical with God."⁷

B. Definition of Terms

In understanding the Barth doctrines (for the literary style of much of Barth is somewhat repetitious and turgid) we have to understand what he means by certain terms used over and over. "*Revelation*," as Barth uses the term, does *not* refer to the written Word of God which we call the Bible. Revelation is the ineffable experience of men, such as prophets or apostles, when they had an "encounter" with God in a "crisis" in their lives, making them subjectively sure that it was God speaking to them. Barth claimed that such revelation was non-propositional, and that people today may have the same "encounter" with God, in a flash, when they become subjectively certain that they have received this revelation from God. In content this revelation does not go beyond the thought that Jesus Christ is Lord. It usually comes when men hear the Bible *proclaimed*, but the Bible is not the Word of God written. The Bible only "holds, encloses, limits and surrounds" God's Word. But the Bible, according to Barth, may be used by God, so that it becomes God's Word for the individual. Revelation, however, "takes place as an event, when and where the word of the Bible becomes God's Word, i.e., when and where the word of the Bible functions as the word of a witness, when and where John's finger points not in vain but really pointedly, when and where by means of its word we also succeed in seeing and hearing what he saw and heard. . . . Therefore where the Word of God is an event, revelation and the Bible are one in fact and word for word at that."^{7a} "The work of God is done through this text [of the Bible]. The miracle of God takes place in this text formed of human words. This text in all its humanity, including all the fallibility which belongs to it, is the object of this work and miracle. By the decision of God this text is now taken and used. . . . If God speaks to

⁷ John Young, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Trinity," p. 3. An unpublished paper on file in the Calvin Theological Seminary Library, Grand Rapids, Mich.

^{7a} Karl Barth; *Dogmatik*, Vol. I, 1, pp. 131-132.

man. He really speaks the language of this concrete human word of man. . . . Verbal inspiration does not mean the infallibility of the biblical word. It means that the fallible and faulty human word is as such used by God and has to be received and heard in spite of its human fallibility."^{7a} "That the Bible is the Word of God cannot mean that with other attributes the Bible has the attribute of being the Word of God. To say that would be to violate the Word of God which is God Himself—to violate the freedom and sovereignty of God."^{7a} It is clear from these quotations that Barth does not regard the Bible as the Word of God *written*, so that it is God's Word apart from its readers. It becomes God's Word, even "word for word" when it is used as the "event" of giving a revelation to a man.

Another word used repeatedly is the word "*proclamation*." It means especially the preaching of the Bible, and it is in the proclamation that God may speak His Word to an individual.

That thought is to be understood in connection with another word often used: the "*freedom*" of God. God is the Sovereign who is free to give His Word, that is, the Word of revelation, to any man whenever He chooses to do so, though almost always in connection with the proclamation of the words of the Bible. To say that the Bible *is* the Word of God would be to limit God's "freedom"!

A word constantly in use by the Neo-Orthodox thinkers is "*encounter*." Man has an "encounter" when he meets God in His revelation as he hears the Bible "proclaimed." When the Bible message is "proclaimed" and expounded, God in His freedom "sanctifies the human pointer to bear witness to Himself." "If there is proclamation, if the attempt does not fail, it is just at the point where success is achieved that it can and will be understood, not as a human success, but as a divine victory concealed in human failure, sovereignly availing itself of human failure."^{7a} As the Rev. John Young says: "God, he tells us, does not reveal an object, propositional truth, to man, but reveals Himself as Subject, in a moment, in a flash, when and where He pleases. . . . But God has so encountered men and the Bible is the fallible record of their human witness attesting the events in which the Word of God came to them. As the Church proclaims the message of the Bible, God will again, as He pleases, reveal Himself to men. 'God reveals Himself as the Lord,' is the summation of the form and content of Biblical revelation." When man today hears the Bible proclaimed in the Church, God freely uses parts of what is thus heard as

the occasion of revealing Himself to the hearer, so the hearer has an "encounter" with God and comes to know that the Sovereign God is the Lord.

C. Barth and Human Immortality

Serious as is this denial by Barth that the Bible is the Word of God *written*, there is one feature of Barth's theology that deals with a most important question of religion, and if our understanding of Barth is correct, it is a feature that condemns his whole system of theology. It is Barth's *apparent denial of the immortality of the human soul*. The thought and language of Barth are so obscure and hazy that one cannot be certain that one has understood him correctly, yet what are we to understand by sentences such as the following: "since my very origin, I am threatened by nothingness; I stand designated, in a certain sense, as a being which is also able to move toward nothingness"?⁸ Barth seems to be writing about human personality, here, not merely the death of the human body. Again: "we shall one day die and thus become only a having-been."⁹ Barth very explicitly asserts that there is no extension of human life after death.¹⁰ After Christ comes again we will have a "present without an afterward."¹¹ Human life is "limited not only at its beginning, but *also with respect to its future*."¹² Barth emphasizes man's existence on this side of death, and says: "besides which and after which he has no other."¹³ Berkouwer remarks: "The once-for-all and 'not to be continued course' of our life receives in this way a peculiar 'urgency' which would be *lacking* were we to hope for a being *freed* from the limitation of life and for a 'beyond' of this limitation instead of hoping in the eternal God alone."¹⁴

It would seem from the above and similar quotations that Barth does not believe in conscious existence of the soul after physical death. The matter is complicated, however, by Barth's strange view that we are to be "eternalized" when we die. He says: "The hope of the New Testament concerning the beyond of human death is not some sort of

⁸ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III, 2, p. 698.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 768.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 759.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 770. Italics Barth's.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 160-161. The reference is to Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 772.

changed life which is continued in some sort of unending future. Not this, but the 'eternalizing' of our endless life is the context of the New Testament hope."¹⁵ Berkouwer says that this "does not include a continuation of our finite existence in the future."¹⁶ Then we find Barth stating that man is not *nothing* after death, but "participates in the eternal life of God."¹⁷ What his teaching about man's being "eternalized" seems to mean is that when Jesus Christ identified himself with mankind on the cross, mankind was united with Christ and redeemed as a whole (a form of universalism), so that mankind at death becomes a part of God's eternal existence. This would seem to approach pantheism. At any rate he appears to deny any real, personal, conscious, individual immortality for mankind, even for Christians. If this is the case, what difference does it really make what man believes about the Bible, God, salvation, or anything else in the realm of theology? If I am to be "eternalized" in such a way that after death I have no conscious existence apart from God's own eternity, then there is little difference between such a view and the view of the atheist that "death is death!" Value inheres to theology because it is related to man's personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ. But if there were no personal, conscious immortality for the individual Christian after death, would not life after all be really futile? Whatever else we may say about this view, praise God it is not the teaching of the Bible.

D. Other Neo-Orthodox Thinkers

We have quoted from Barth at length because he is the real founder of Neo-Orthodoxy. In dealing with the basic teaching about revelation in Barth, however, we are at the same time dealing with all Neo-Orthodox theologians, for they all reject the Bible as the Word of God *written*. For them the Bible is a fallible, human group of documents, containing many errors of both history and doctrine. For them the Bible is a human "witness" to a revelation received by the prophets and the apostles. Their point of view is that it makes little difference whether the alleged errors in the Bible are real errors or not, for they say that God could give His revelation through erroneous documents as well as through documents that were without error. In other words, God's revelation was really independent of the Bible text. The Bible

¹⁵ Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 759.

¹⁶ Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

¹⁷ Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 770.

thus might be a collection of myths and unreliable sagas and still be used by God as the occasion of giving a revelation of Himself as Lord to the reader who hears the Bible proclaimed. Some parts of the Bible might be the Word of God to one man and not to another. Other parts might be God's Word to the second man and not to the first, who is left cold and unresponsive since he did not have an "encounter" with God while reading or hearing it. The *whole* Bible is not the Word of God *written*, in the view of these thinkers, but any part of it might *become* the Word of God to different individuals.

With no absolute external standard of truth, it is inevitable that there should be vast differences in the theological views of the different Neo-Orthodox thinkers. Thus Barth accepts the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, while Tillich, Niebuhr, and Emil Brunner are said to reject that belief.

It is this rejection of the Bible as the Word of God *written* (i.e., that what is written in the Bible is reliable and true, whether we have an "encounter" with God when we read or hear it read or not, and is thus God's Word regardless of who reads or likes it or does not like it) that is fundamental to all Neo-Orthodox theologians. If the arguments and evidence which we have presented and will present in the rest of this book are valid, then the whole Neo-Orthodox position is undermined. When the orthodox view that the whole Bible is the Word of God *written* is rejected, then each theologian becomes a subjective standard of truth, with no unity or permanence in various individual theological views.

The evangelical Christian's view of revelation is of course entirely different. God spoke to the prophets and the apostles giving all that is necessary for us to know about God and salvation in a completed group of documents which we call the Bible. That group of documents was attested as inspired by God by miracles and fulfilled prophecy. Though the Neo-Orthodox theologians speak of their "encounter" with God at the time of "crisis" in their personal life, they do not claim to have attested revelations of new truth from God.

Christianity, then, to the evangelical Christian, is the one true and final religion, the only true religion that offers eternal salvation, in a conscious existence with Christ and the redeemed through all eternity, to a sin-sick world. All our arguments which show that the Bible is trustworthy, that the text of the Bible is reliable, and that the attacks made by the higher critics have no real basis in objective evidence

support the claims of the Bible documents themselves that they are the inerrant, inspired Word of God *written*. This is our reply to Neo-Orthodoxy.

VI. RUDOLF BULTMANN'S DEMYTHOLOGIZING PRINCIPLE

Since the middle twenties, the demythologizing principles of the New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann have had an increasing influence on New Testament criticism. Bultmann's approach follows existentialism for its philosophical presuppositions, but his peculiar views regarding revelation and what he calls "myths" in the Bible have given him a unique position among New Testament scholars.

It is difficult to formulate his definition of "myth," for he uses the term in different ways. The definition which he gives in a footnote in *Kerygma and Myth* would seem to indicate that Bultmann uses "myth" as a synonym for "symbolism." "Mythology is the use of imagery to express the other worldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side."¹⁸ While the ordinary idea of a myth is that it is an invented story to explain something in nature, the use which Bultmann here makes of the term would seem to be entirely different and largely unobjectionable. Another definition is: "It may be said that myths give to the transcendent reality an immanent, this-worldly objectivity. Myths give worldly objectivity to that which is unworldly."¹⁹ However, when Bultmann expands this idea of myth to include the supernatural activity of God in this world, he is on more objectionable ground: "Mythological thought regards the divine activity, whether in nature or in history, as interference with the course of nature, history or the life of the soul, a tearing it asunder—a miracle, in fact."²⁰

Bultmann's idea of myth becomes fundamentally objectionable when he applies it to some of the most important doctrines of Christianity and to miracles and spiritual realities: "The New Testament pictures of heaven and of the resurrection of Jesus are, despite their reserve, just as mythological in principle as the corresponding pictures in Jewish literature or in the Gospel of Peter."²¹ According to Markus Barth, Bultmann regards as myth the preëxistence of Christ, his incarnation,

¹⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 10, footnote 2.

¹⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 18-20.

²⁰ Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 197.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

resurrection, ascension, parousia, and judgment, and the sacrificial view of Christ's death.²² Since, "the forces and laws of nature have been discovered, we can no longer believe in spirits, whether good or evil."²³

Perhaps the explanation of Bultmann's rejection of these supernatural elements of Christianity is his idea that the world and life view of Bible times is no longer tenable today, since the discoveries of modern science have made it impossible for "modern man" to hold to such supernatural explanations of natural events.²⁴

But what makes the contribution to theological thought by Bultmann distinctive is that he regards even the doctrines and miracles which he cannot accept as literally true, as being existentially true. That is, they expressed the experience of the people of Bible times with non-spatial reality, in language which was in accord with the world and life view of those times. Thus the problem for the exegete of today, according to Bultmann, is to "demythologize" the language of the Bible. That is, he must eliminate the mythological elements, or rather, interpret those elements in terms which will be acceptable to "the modern scientific man." The kerygma²⁵ embedded in the mythological language of the New Testament will be lost if we try to make the "scientific man" accept the language of the Bible. The only way to preserve the kerygma for the "modern man" is to demythologize the Bible. The kerygma (that is, the proclamation of God's revelation to man) is couched in mythological language and, if it is to be preserved, must be shucked out by the exegete.

The basic criticism of Bultmann's demythologizing is that it tends to "throw out the baby with the bath water"! It is perfectly true that today we do not accept the "three-dimensional view" of heaven as above us and hell as below us and earth as where we live. But that does not mean that heaven and hell are not realities. Since heaven is where God is, and God is everywhere, heaven is in the spiritual realm, a sort of "fifth dimension" invisible to the eyes of sense. In the same way hell is the separation from God and the redeemed in the spiritual realm. The unrepentant sinner is left to the anguish of his accusing conscience, which is worse than the fires of a literal lake of fire and brimstone. The figurative or symbolic language of the Bible is not difficult to interpret for the orthodox Christian. No one in his right mind would think that

²² Markus Barth, in *Journal of Religion*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 145-155.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ The term "kerygma" was not first used by Bultmann. C. H. Dodd also used it.

the mountains and hills can literally "break forth into singing" or that the trees can "clap their hands"!²⁶

But to put miracles in the class of fictitious myths or to regard the bodily resurrection of Christ as unreal and the doctrine of the preëxistence and incarnation of Christ as literally untrue, simply because some imaginary "scientific man" of the present day does not believe in them, is an entirely different matter. Bultmann apparently begs the whole question of supernaturalism in his "demythologizing" principle. If God can, in His omnipotence, break through the realm of sense supernaturally, to perform a miracle, then we are dealing with actual facts, facts for the age in which we live as well as for the age of the Bible documents. Basically it is a question of the omnipotence of God. As was shown in Chapter V, the theistic view of God makes the matter of miracles a question of historical fact, for if God has the power to intervene in the universe He has created, it becomes a matter of His plan and purpose, and of whether that plan and purpose includes the miraculous.

VII. BULTMANN'S IDEA OF REVELATION

For Bultmann the Bible is not the revelation of God *written*. It is the Neo-Orthodox view of revelation, as the crisis in which God breaks through the veil of sense to make man conscious of Him in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the impartation of knowledge, but the placing of man in "a new situation as a self."²⁷ It is the "disclosure of God to man."²⁸ "Thus revelation consists in nothing other than the fact of Jesus Christ."²⁹ "Thus what the New Testament understands by revelation can only become clear when these two series of statements are both maintained and related to each other: (1) Life is revealed, Christ is revealed; (2) the word of proclamation and faith are revealed. . . . Revelation is an occurrence. . . . Revelation . . . takes place in ourselves."³⁰ "Revelation encounters man in the word—in the word that sounds forth in his present. . . . It is only in faith that the object of faith

²⁶ Isaiah 55:12.

²⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, "Revelation in the New Testament," in *Existence and Faith*, p. 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

is disclosed: therefore, faith itself belongs to revelation."³¹ "The answer to the question how revelation is understood in the New Testament cannot be understood as a simple communication, but only as personal address."³² Bultmann makes it clear that his idea of revelation is not that of historical Christianity, in the following quotation: "Thus it becomes completely clear that revelation is an act of God, an occurrence, and not a communication of supernatural knowledge. Further it is clear that revelation reveals life, for it frees man from what is provisional and past and gives him the future. Even so, it is clear that Christ is revelation and revelation is the word; for these two are one and the same."³³

From the last quotation it can be understood why Bultmann feels free to disregard even well-attested statements of historical facts in the Bible, for the proclamation of the kerygma is not bound to the text itself, which may be (and, according to Bultmann, is) very faulty. Christ can be met whenever the kerygma is proclaimed, even in a myth.

The element of truth in Bultmann's idea of revelation is in the realization that bald historical facts, or the interpretation of those facts by doctrines, may and sometimes do leave a person cold and spiritually indifferent to the doctrines. "The devils believe and tremble."³⁴ Unless a person accepts Christ as the Lord of his life, and has a born-again Christian experience, he does not have eternal life. In other words, Christ must be revealed in his soul, even as Bultmann and the Neo-Orthodox thinkers insist.

But that does not mean that God cannot reveal and has not revealed truth objectively in the Bible as the Word of God, *written*. Moreover, it is to be doubted whether Christian experiences of God and Christ would long continue to take place in mankind if the objective truth of the Bible were discarded, or if the whole Bible were regarded as filled with errors of fact and doctrine. As Dr. J. Gresham Machen used to insist, Christianity is a religion based on historical facts, and if those were not facts at all, or if they were demythologized, then eventually Christianity would probably disappear.

In this brief discussion of the teaching of Bultmann we have dealt

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁴ James 2:19.

with only two of its most important phases: revelation and demythologization. These ideas underlie his treatment of other doctrines, and when we have considered these, we have penetrated to the heart of his whole position. Bultmann feels that if Christianity is to become acceptable to "the modern scientific man" the "myths" of the Bible must be reinterpreted in language which will not clash with the life and world view of the present scientific age.

It is to be questioned, however, whether the gospel or "kerygma" will be any more acceptable to the "scientific mind" after all this demythologizing takes place than it is in its historic form. The bodily resurrection of Christ was just as much foolishness to the Greeks of Paul's day as it allegedly is to the "modern scientific man" of today. We must always remember that unless the Holy Spirit "encounters" men in regeneration, no one will be placed in "a new situation as a self." If that new birth is given to a man, whether he be a scientific man or a day laborer, faith in Christ will inevitably follow. With genuine faith in Christ will follow faith in the supernatural elements of the Bible, and neither the miracles nor what Bultmann calls "myths" will longer be stumbling blocks.

One more word in closing this section. Just where are we to find the "modern scientific man" that Bultmann talks about? It would seem that there are as many scientific men to whom the supernaturalism of the Bible is no stumbling block as there are those who reject it. Though Bultmann pays lip service at least to the sovereignty of God, practically he ignores it in his treatment of conversion. Men are to be brought to the acceptance of Christianity by merely rational processes. He assumes that no one will accept the "myths," so called, if he has a scientific education, unless they are first "demythologized" and brought into conformity with the "world and life view" of the present day. Actually no one will be brought to the acceptance of the gospel message for himself unless the Holy Spirit first regenerates him, and then the "demythologizing" will be unnecessary.

VIII. FORM CRITICISM

There is one more aspect of destructive higher criticism which must be briefly mentioned: *form criticism*. Among its chief advocates have been Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Dibelius. They hold that the worship of Jesus as Lord and Saviour arose in the Hellenistic church, with

certain elements, such as the Messiahship of Jesus, arising in the Jewish church. They claim that the historical forms of the Gospel narratives were invented by the writers of the Gospels to give continuity to the oral sayings of Jesus current in the church when the Gospels were written. By isolating the sayings of Jesus, and through "demythologizing" the whole narrative, these critics thought they could restore the original teachings of Jesus.

If one rejects supernaturalism, as these critics do, the net results of such criticism are a foregone conclusion. Demythologizing the whole account means that miracles and other supernaturalistic elements must be interpreted in terms which will preserve the "encounter" the disciples had with God through Jesus, while at the same time the account is to be made acceptable to the "modern scientific mind." In plain English, the result is to reject the miracles and all supernaturalism. The form critics have hardly faced seriously the view that both the sayings of Jesus and the events of his life may have actually occurred while Jesus Christ, the God-man, lived in Palestine in the first century A.D. All that has been said in reply to the other higher critics applies with equal force to the position of the form critics.

If we admit the possibility of supernatural intervention by the Sovereign Triune God in the mundane affairs of men for the all-sufficient purpose of revealing the way sin-cursed humanity can get back into fellowship with God through the atonement of God the Son, Jesus Christ, the whole question of the written revelation from God in the Bible becomes a matter of historical evidence. God intervened in the universe through a change in the way He ordinarily acts, in order to save His people from the curse, power, and presence of sin, both in this life and in the life to come. The weight of the historical evidence supports the evangelical view of the Bible as the Word of God *written*.

CHAPTER XV

THE ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES IN THE BIBLE

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the commonest arguments urged against the belief that the Bible is the Word of God is the fact that there are various apparent discrepancies in both the Old and New Testaments. If these discrepancies existed in the original documents themselves, it is evident that the books containing them could not have been inspired by God. Of course the believer here can fall back on the fact that the Bible has been copied by scribes many times, and that no doctrine of inspiration holds that the copyists were inspired. Whatever the mistakes or discrepancies in the documents as we have them at present, they may have crept in consciously or unconsciously in transmission.

However, there are certain limits beyond which we cannot go in ascribing errors to the copyists and still hold both to the inspiration of the original manuscripts and to the trustworthiness of the documents as we now have them. As we have shown in Chapter X, if these errors were sufficiently numerous or important, they would render the whole Bible untrustworthy both as to history and as to religious teaching, unless it were possible to ascertain with approximate accuracy what the text of the original documents was.

It now becomes necessary, therefore, to examine these alleged discrepancies and to see whether they refuse to disappear under the examination of textual criticism, or whether they are only *apparent* and not real, before we abandon our belief in the trustworthiness of the Scriptures.

II. DIFFERENT WAYS BY WHICH VARIOUS DISCREPANCIES ARE REMOVED

In the first place, various apparent discrepancies are discrepancies only in the translation which we use; they are perfectly reconcilable when we go to the text of the original language itself. We cannot hold the Bible responsible for discrepancies which are due to faulty translation.

In the second place, as has been pointed out in Chapter XIII, in the Old Testament the Hebrew vowel points are not inspired, and it is possible to remove a number of discrepancies by reading other vowel points in the disputed passages in place of those used in the Masoretic Text.

In the third place, as was also pointed out in Chapter XIII, comparison of the Masoretic Text with the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the texts of the different versions, the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, and other sources, shows that in a number of difficult passages there are variant readings which have good textual evidence back of them, and which, if accepted, would remove discrepancies.

In the fourth place, narrative discrepancies in the Pentateuch in particular are removed by transposing certain passages in the text, without changing the text itself.

In the fifth place, in the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament, textual criticism is able to remove many difficulties by discovering other more probable readings which clear up the apparent discrepancies.

III. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES

Before taking up typical examples of the alleged discrepancies, a few remarks are in order. First, these discrepancies have existed throughout the course of the history of the Bible and have been recognized by both friends and foes of Christianity. The Christian Church has grown in spite of them. Fair treatment of the Bible has removed most of them, and those which seem impossible to remove, in view of our ignorance of the circumstances and the pertinent facts, can be allowed to stand until new light on the Bible text is thrown on the difficulties. Is it

reasonable to suppose that the great thinkers of the early church would have continued to regard the Bible as trustworthy, and as being inspired by God, if they had thought that these apparent discrepancies were irreconcilable? Of course it may be replied that, in spite of anachronisms in the Koran and garbled Biblical history, Mohammedanism still persists, for it is hard to convince people against their will. Islam, however, has been largely isolated from critical discussion of such difficulties, and the attitude of ruthless suppression of opposition to the Koran on the part of the Mohammedan leaders in the past largely explains why the discrepancies were not barriers to Islam's expansion and persistence. It will be recalled that when the great library of Alexandria was burned by the Moslem caliph, he replied to those who pled with him to save the library that if it was in the Koran the books were not needed, and if the information was not in the Koran it was unnecessary!

The Christian Church, on the other hand, has always shown a zeal for the truth, so that if the discrepancies seemed too many to make it possible for us to maintain the historical trustworthiness and inspiration of the Bible, that fact would have been recognized long ago. The great thinkers of the church, however, felt that the so-called discrepancies either were illusory or could be explained as more historical facts came to light. Sometimes these apparent discrepancies are pounced upon by the critics in great glee as though they were the discoveries of "modern scholarship" and had never been brought to the attention of the Christian Church before this time.

Second, we must remember that if there is some difficulty which we cannot reconcile, that does not mean that no one else can reconcile it! Wisdom has not reached a pinnacle with our minds, nor will it disappear after we are gone! Someone else may be able to solve the problem, or perhaps someone else has *already* solved it, unknown to us. There is no reason why we should give up belief in the Bible simply because *we*, with the insufficient evidence which we have, cannot see a complete solution. It may be, as has been pointed out in a previous chapter, that archaeology will discover something tomorrow which will throw new light on the difficulty. Since the publication of the first edition of this book, in 1927, the archaeologists have turned up a flood of new evidence bearing on the trustworthiness of the Bible, and many obscure passages have cleared up. Much remains to be discovered, but the statement of

Nelson Glueck previously quoted is highly encouraging.¹ New light may soon be turned on the difficulties that remain, as has been done over and over again in the past. The other evidence for the trustworthiness of the Scriptures as a whole might even be so strong that we could overlook a few minor discrepancies and accept the documents on *faith*, in those places where we are unable to reconcile apparent discrepancies, trusting that if we had the knowledge at the disposal of the original writers, the difficulty could be reconciled.

Third, the fact that the Biblical writers are historically trustworthy in all places where they can be tested by external evidence raises the strongest kind of presumption that there are no real contradictions in their original manuscripts. Our ability to prove from their documents that they were honest and sincere in their treatment of historical questions leads us to believe that, when they claim to speak and write under the control of the Holy Spirit, they were actually kept by his power from making errors in their manuscripts. When all apparent discrepancies and contradictions are taken into account, the astounding fact remains that the history corresponds to what we can learn from external sources in all essential details! The whole system of chronology, geography, ethnology, and topography of the Bible corresponds to the external evidence without changing the text of the Bible in any way. Undoubtedly, then, even the most difficult problems could be solved if we had at our disposal the knowledge of the original writers. The argument for the accuracy of the Biblical text from the fact that the names of the kings have been handed down correctly raises too strong a supposition in its favor to be ignored.

IV. DIFFERENT CLASSES OF ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES²

Some discrepancies are due to failure to read exactly what the Bible says. A great many people who do not read the Bible carefully assume that there is a contradiction between different passages, when a careful reading of even the text of a translation would show that no contradiction existed. For example, many people allege that in one place the Bible says that Adam and Eve were the first inhabitants of the earth, while in another place it implies that Cain married a wife from the land of Nod. Actually, however, the Bible does not say that Cain

¹ *New York Times*, October 28, 1956, a review by Dr. Nelson Glueck of Werner Keller's *The Bible as History*.

² Cf. J. W. Haley, *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*.

married a wife from the land of Nod, but that he *dwelt* in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden, and while there *knew* his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. In other words, it is perfectly possible to say that he had a wife before he went into the land of Nod, his wife being, of course, one of the daughters of Adam and Eve mentioned in Genesis 5:4. The Bible account does not mention the names of *all* Adam's children, and in fact does not mention *any* of the female children by name. What it is concerned with is the names of the important male descendants of Adam, so it omits the other details of Adam's family life. Moreover, it is important to notice, Genesis 5:4 does not say that the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve were all born *after* Seth. The whole emphasis is on the fact that Seth is the son who was to take the place of Abel and be the ancestor of the chosen line. It is highly probable that daughters, and sons too, were born to Adam and Eve before the birth of Seth, though the Bible says nothing about it. There are many so-called discrepancies of this kind that can be resolved easily if careful attention is paid to what the Bible actually says, and not to what we think it says.

A second class of discrepancies arises from false interpretations of the Bible. What the Bible actually teaches is a different question from what men have *thought* it taught. The Bible is not to be held responsible for our ignorance or misconceptions. The whole aim of exegesis should be to discover what the author wanted to say and what the readers for whom he was writing would have been likely to *understand* that he said. When men of a different country, with little understanding of, and less sympathy for, the manner of thought of the people who have given us the Bible examine it, it is small wonder that they are not always able to comprehend the language and imagery of the Bible, and that through their lack of understanding, false interpretations of the Bible sometimes produce apparent discrepancies. For example, the traditional explanation of the Gospel accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ is that Jesus died on Friday and rose from the dead on Sunday morning; for parts of three days, that is, he continued in the tomb. According to Jewish custom a part of a day was called a whole day, so that it could be said that he was three days in the tomb.

However, an explanation that would better fit the Gospel record is that Jesus was crucified on Thursday and rose from the dead on Sunday before daybreak. He would thus have been in the grave three days and three nights. The arguments for this are as follows:

1. Jesus said in Matthew 12:40, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster; so shall the Son of man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth." Notice the emphasis which Jesus put on the *three days and three nights*.

2. If Jesus was crucified on Friday, it would *leave one day vacant*³ during the preceding days of Passion week, while if he was crucified on Thursday every day would be filled with events. It seems improbable that during that last week Jesus would have left one day with no important events in it.

3. We are told in John 19:31 that the day following the crucifixion was "a high day"—that is, it was the Passover Sabbath. The chances would be six to one that the Passover Sabbath was not the weekly Sabbath that year. If it was not, then there were two Sabbaths that week. As a matter of fact, the 14th Nisan fell on Friday in A.D. 29. That was the only time between A.D. 24 and A.D. 33 that the 14th Nisan (the day before the Passover Sabbath) fell on Friday.⁴ If the crucifixion was on Friday, therefore, it had to be in A.D. 29. But A.D. 30 is the year usually thought to have been the year of Jesus' crucifixion.⁵ It would seem, therefore, that the crucifixion occurred on Thursday, A.D. 30.

4. There is one more bit of evidence on this subject. In John 12:1 it is stated that "Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany." On the day after that occurred the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Since the Passover began at sundown on the previous day, we would have Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, making the six days, with the Passover Sabbath beginning at sundown on Thursday.

A third group of discrepancies arises from a wrong idea of the Bible teachings as a whole. Many people seem to think that when we say that the Bible is the Word of God we mean that every word in it was spoken by God and therefore true. This of course is not the case. The Bible contains many things that are *false*! What the doctrine of inspiration teaches is that the persons who are said to have spoken certain words actually said them. For example, the fact that the fool said in his heart, "There is no God," was true, but *what* the fool said was a lie! The devil in the form of a serpent told a lie to Eve when he said, "Thou shall not

³ Burton, *Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 196.

⁴ John Stewart, quotation from the lecturer on chronology at the University of Oxford, in an article in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, July, 1932, p. 304.

⁵ *Holy Bible*, The Berkeley Version, New Testament, p. 109.

surely die," but the fact that he said it was true. The Bible contains the record of what good men said, what bad men said, inspired men said, uninspired men said, angels and even the devil himself said. The fact that they said what they are recorded as saying was true, but the content of what they said may or may not have been true, depending on *who* said it and also on *what* was said. Often we are not told whether what they said was true or not and must decide for ourselves. Many of the difficulties and apparent discrepancies arise from the fact that people do not notice who is the speaker. If an uninspired man is the speaker, or if the author is reporting what someone else thought or said, it may or may not be true. Discrepancies arising from this cause cannot be charged against the Bible, for the doctrine of inspiration does not guarantee the truth of what uninspired men and women may have said.

A fourth class of discrepancies arises from the fact that a writer may not be recording all the events which happened or all the words that were spoken. Another writer may give other events which happened or other words that were spoken at the same time the events of the first writer's narrative were taking place. Both accounts may be literally true and yet totally different. For example, the Gospels differ in their accounts of the words written on the superscription on the cross. Matthew says "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" was written over his head. Mark says, "the superscription of his accusation was written over, 'The King of the Jews.'" Luke says, "there was also a superscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'" John says, "And there was written, 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews'. . . written in Hebrew, and in Latin and in Greek." Now each of these four statements can be considered true. It is probable that the full superscription and the name was: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." No one of the Gospel writers gave the whole of what was written, but each one the essential part, that it was "The King of the Jews" who was crucified.

In the same way the different accounts of the resurrection of Jesus may be reconciled. It is difficult for us to get the events arranged in their proper order when we study the four Gospels, for each is talking about different appearances of Jesus, and different encounters with the angels. But that does not mean that any of the appearances mentioned was false. The writers were simply giving additional information which they possessed about the whole subject. It is possible to

reconcile similarly most of the other alleged discrepancies among the four Gospels.

A fifth group of alleged discrepancies arises from our lack of appreciation of the purpose which the author had and the method which he used in writing. Many times people fail to realize that certain passages contain characteristic oriental hyperbole (exaggeration for effect), which the people who read the words or heard them uttered understood perfectly, but which literal-minded people of the Occident misinterpret. For example, when Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother . . . he cannot be my disciple," the people who heard him speak of course did not take him literally. They understood perfectly that Jesus was putting in a striking way the truth that no one who put human relationships before the love for and service of Christ was a true disciple of Christ. In the same way a number of other striking epigrams throughout the Bible are hyperbolical ways of expressing spiritual truth. The people to whom they were addressed grasped their meaning easily, and it is not the Holy Spirit's fault if someone reading these passages today has not enough imagination to catch the obvious truth at a glance.

Then, too, many passages of the Scriptures, as in the Psalms, are intended to be read as poetry, while other passages, in the prophecies, are full of figurative and symbolic language. Any person who can read of the mountains and hills breaking forth into singing, and of the trees of the field clapping their hands, and think that the author meant these passages to be interpreted literally, is intellectually hopeless! Sometimes it is very difficult for us to determine whether the author meant his words to be taken literally or not, but it is unfair to charge a real discrepancy in such cases, when the author may have been using only figurative language.

A sixth class of difficulties concerns discrepancies in chronology. As was said in Chapter X, the system of chronology found in the Bible has been confirmed by historical research, though the exact dates are uncertain. The reason for this uncertainty is that the people of that time cared little whether their dates exactly corresponded to the calendar or not. They reckoned time by events, not by years, and many times they dated the years of their calendar by events of which we know nothing. Sometimes a king was crowned while the previous king was still living, as in the case of Solomon, so that when his reign is

spoken of as forty years, and that of David as forty years, we cannot tell whether the historian means that Solomon reigned forty years altogether or forty years after David's death. Our ignorance on these points, however, does not make a contradiction in the text. If we had the facts at the disposal of the writer we could solve the difficulty, but the absence of those facts does not make an error in the text.

Again, the fact that genealogies are arranged in convenient form for memorizing, and that the same individual in parallel genealogies is called by different names, does not mean that the lists themselves are in error. Nor does the fact that the genealogies often leave out several links in order to give the line of descent and at the same time make it easy to memorize render them less reliable for the purpose for which they were written. Sometimes lines of descent are traced through different branches of the family, which were reunited at a later date by intermarriage. In the eyes of the law, the husband could take the wife's place in the genealogy, and probably certain links in parallel genealogies that are hard to reconcile can be explained in this way.

Then, too, what will be said later on in regard to errors in numbers applies to chronologies as well, and if we had the facts at the disposal of the original writers we would be able to explain difficulties regarding dates and figures in the lists of kings and patriarchs. At any rate, in the absence of evidence on the subject there is no reason for using our ignorance as an argument against the Bible documents.

A seventh class of alleged discrepancies pertains to numbers. The numbers in the different armies are sometimes difficult to account for, when the size of the countries concerned is taken into consideration. However, we know from external evidence that the Hebrews undoubtedly used a notation system, as did the nations around them. Probably the numbers were originally written according to that notation system; then later, when some scribe recognized the danger that the figures might become corrupt in transmission, these numbers were written out as words in order to make it easier to preserve them from copyists' errors. However, before this change was made, the numbers in some cases may have become corrupt, though we cannot be certain that the figures are wrong as we have them, in view of the fact that such large armies fought in both World Wars. We must remember, moreover, that in those days an army consisted of all the males capable of bearing arms, so that it is entirely possible that the armies were

actually as large as they appear to be according to the reading of the text as it stands.

As for the fact that round numbers are used, surely error cannot be charged against the documents on that ground, when all the readers understood just what was meant. When a person says that the populations of a city is a hundred thousand, everyone realizes that he is using round numbers, and the exact number may be more or less than the hundred thousand mentioned. No one would charge him with error or falsehood because he did not give the exact figures of the population at the instant he spoke!

An eighth class of alleged contradictions concerns doctrines. This subject has already been dealt with in the chapter on "The Unity of the Bible" and only needs to be touched upon here. It is possible to claim that such differences exist only by the most superficial methods of exegesis. The idea that there is a contradiction between Paul and James in regard to the doctrine of faith comes only from a lack of spiritual insight as well as a lack of careful and sympathetic reading of both authors. Even the hardest passages to reconcile, such as the different versions of the decree of the Apostolic Council in Acts and Galatians, can easily be cleared up if the evidence from textual criticism is considered and the passages are examined closely and sympathetically.

A ninth class of so-called discrepancies is produced by the use of the same Hebrew words in different places with different meanings. For example, the Hebrew word *yarash* means both "to possess" and "to dispossess." The word *naḳar* means both "to know" and "not to know." It is easy to see how different interpretations of a passage could be made which would produce a discrepancy due to our ignorance of which meaning the author had in mind.

V. DOGMATIC PREJUDICE

It is unfortunately the case that many people *do not want to be convinced* that the Bible is the Word of God. It contains teachings that rebuke their way of living, and no matter how much proof is produced they *will* not believe. Evil-minded men will read the passages in the Bible which pitilessly reveal the sins of the Biblical characters and say that such a book is not the Word of God for it is not fit to read. A pure-minded man will read the same passages and recognize that God's

purpose in allowing them to be included in the Bible is to teach the awful sinfulness of man, and to warn us that the best men are subject to temptations and can fall into the grossest sins. The Bible never allows us to be in doubt about God's attitude in such cases, and always shows us the result of the sin in the person's life and in the lives of his descendants. Other men will make some assumption about the Bible and then distort the text to make the assumption fit. A large number of the so-called discrepancies in the Bible are the result of such dogmatic prejudice. Men will ignore all possible solutions of a difficult passage that would remove contradictions, seize upon the one possible interpretation that would produce a discrepancy, and then insist that the Bible *must* be wrong. Most of the discrepancies in the Bible are of this kind. There is a probable solution which would remove all contradiction and there is another possible interpretation that would make a contradiction. In the absence of external evidence bearing on the case, is not the Bible entitled to the benefit of the doubt when it is proved trustworthy in so many other places?

CHAPTER XVI

DOCTRINAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE BIBLE

I. INTRODUCTION. IF THE BIBLE IS TRUE, IT IS OUR DUTY TO ACCEPT ITS DOCTRINES

As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, if the Bible is the Word of God, it is not for us to say whether the doctrines taught therein seem reasonable to us or not. If God has given them to us, they must be true, and it is our place to study them and accept them as true, whether we can reconcile them with our finite minds or not. One of the greatest difficulties we have with certain of these doctrines is that they are an attempt to explain *infinite* truths in *finite* language. It is to be expected that under the circumstances we may not be able to grasp the full significance of the doctrines, or to reconcile the facts which God reveals to us with our finite human experiences and finite minds. That does not mean that they are irreconcilable with reason, but simply that we have not the facts sufficient to reconcile them.

If God were to reveal anything to mankind, by supernatural revelation, certainly it would not be truths which man could reach through his unaided human reason, but truths which man could not possibly learn *without* such divine revelation. We do not claim, therefore, that it is possible to prove the truth of all the doctrines of the Christian religion by human reason. In fact, many of these doctrines are directly opposite to what we would expect if we were to reason only about what we learn from general revelation in nature around us. For example, the doctrine of redemption at first sight seems entirely contrary to what we would expect God to do. From studying nature we learn that there is no escaping the punishment for breaking the laws of what we call "nature." From an examination of the proofs of a future life, one of the strongest arguments for existence after death is the proba-

bility that God will punish sins that go unpunished in this life and reward the good deeds of the righteous that go unrewarded on earth. It seems impossible to believe, at first sight, that the infinite God would, if he were a just God, forgo the punishment of any sin for any reason whatever. From a rational point of view, who would expect that God would send His only begotten Son to bear the punishment of our sin in our place and allow us through faith in him to receive salvation, as the Bible teaches? But though such a doctrine cannot be attained by the unaided human reason, after it is revealed it can be *understood* by human minds.

Therefore, if what we mean by saying that many Christian doctrines are unreasonable is that they are not such doctrines as a study of nature and human experience would lead one to expect to be true, we must freely admit that they are, in that sense of the term, unreasonable. If they were not revealed to us by God we could not accept them as true. But if what we mean by calling them unreasonable is that they are doctrines which are irrational once they are understood, or doctrines which we cannot understand when we are taught them, we must deny the charge. They can be understood in part, at least, by the mind, when a revelation is given by God concerning them, and they are not irrational when understood correctly. It must be admitted frankly that many of these doctrines could not be believed unless they came to us by the authority of God Himself. In presenting the gospel to an unbeliever, these doctrines are never to be presented as subjects for argumentative proof. Belief in such doctrines as the Trinity can only come *after* a person is convinced that such truth has been revealed in the Bible by the Eternal God himself.

II. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD OR NOT PRECEDES THE QUESTION OF ACCEPTANCE OF BIBLE DOCTRINES

It is not to be expected that a person can accept the doctrines taught in the Bible as true without being first convinced that the Bible is the Word of God. Of course, some minds are so constituted that they can accept doctrines taught in the Bible without giving careful thought or consideration to whether the Bible is true or not, and after they have accepted them as true their Christian experience becomes the basis of their faith. We would not belittle such faith, though there is danger of

its being unstable before the attacks of opponents of the Bible, but for many people who do their own thinking, this course is impossible.

While most children accept the word of their parents and teachers that the Bible doctrines are true, because they trust the opinion of such people consciously or unconsciously, many of them, upon reaching an age when they begin to reason for themselves, find doubts assailing them in regard to the truthfulness of the doctrines that they have always accepted unthinkingly. Unless their faith is well grounded in knowledge as to why the Bible is the Word of God, they may be tempted to give it up.

Anyone who reads the Bible with a receptive and unprejudiced mind, or listens to a powerful and sincere evangelist like Billy Graham, cannot help being impressed and even convinced with the truth of the Word of God, for the Holy Spirit uses such reading and listening to bring people to Christ. It is important to remember, however, that such faith *assumes* the truth of the Bible, and when afterward we hear or see the truth of the Bible challenged with plausible arguments, it is difficult to defend our faith against these attacks. In such a case, though we may retain our faith because we have experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, the power of our witness to others will be crippled, and those who have not had the same experience of regeneration may be kept by the enemies' attacks from accepting the Christian religion.

Therefore, let us keep in mind that, while most Christians merely assume the truth of the Bible as a basis for their belief in the doctrines which the Bible teaches, without that assumption they could not have faith in the doctrines themselves. No one who was convinced that the Bible was *not* the Word of God could logically retain faith in any doctrines taught in the Bible which did not appeal to his reason. Before, then, we have a logical right to ask men to accept the doctrines taught in the Bible, we must first convince them that the Bible is the *Word of God*. After they are convinced of that point, we may demand that they accept the doctrines taught in the Bible as a revelation from God and therefore true. No one who admits that the Bible is the Word of God has any logical right to question the truth of any of the doctrines taught therein. Plainly, therefore, it would be futile to attempt to convert anyone to Christianity by attempting to prove the truth of a Bible doctrine, if he denied the truth of the Bible. That question must first

be settled before we can hope to get him to accept the Christian doctrines.

III. OBJECTIONS TO BIBLE DOCTRINES SOMETIMES HINDER BELIEF IN THE BIBLE'S TRUTH

However, though logically the question of acceptance of Bible doctrines should not be discussed until after the Bible has been accepted as the Word of God, certain Christian doctrines often are serious obstacles to men's acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God. There is no good reason why this should be so, for if the evidence that the Bible is the Word of God is conclusive, the question of what the Bible teaches should be immaterial as an objection against its truth, for the reasons given above. Nevertheless some doctrines *are* obstacles to faith with some men, largely because they misunderstand them or because they have heard only caricatures of the real doctrines as they are commonly held by the Christian Church. In this chapter, then, we shall touch upon a few of these doctrines and try to show that they are not as illogical as men suppose. We do not claim that it is possible to prove their truth by rational argument or by evidence external to the Bible, but perhaps some words of explanation will remove some of the misunderstandings about them.

IV. THE DOCTRINES

A. *The Doctrine of the Trinity*

Perhaps the most difficult of all the Christian doctrines to explain and to understand is the doctrine of the Trinity. The definition of this doctrine in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is as good as any: "There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." What is meant by this definition is that the Christian God is one God, not three Gods, but that in this single Godhead there are three equal persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We must admit at once that the human reason has extreme difficulty in even understanding how this can be true, and that the doctrine could never have been discovered by the unaided human reason. We must accept the doctrine only because God has revealed it to us in the Bible. The fact that it is hard to understand

cannot be used as an argument against our accepting it as true, if God has revealed it. The very difficulty of understanding it lies in the fact that it is an attempt to explain the infinite nature of God and the hidden mysteries of God in finite language. There are many things in the world which are true but which cannot be understood. What is the real nature of electricity? What is the very essence of life? The complex protein molecules which are alive do not explain what makes them *alive*. What enables a human body to turn the same food into bone, teeth, flesh, blood, and hair? These are only a few of the questions which man has never been able to answer, and possibly never will. But that fact does not affect their truth. They exist, and their existence does not depend upon our understanding them. In the same way, the Triune God exists and His existence does not depend upon our understanding the mysteries of His nature.

The Bible's revelation of God's nature as a Trinity helps us to understand Him as a self-conscious, loving Being and adds new fullness and richness to our conception of Him. A great many illustrations are given of the Trinity, all of which never do full justice to the facts. It is said that as fire has the qualities of light, heat, and the power to consume combustibles, so God has three ways in which His activity appears, but this is only an imperfect analogy and does not do full justice to the persons of the Godhead. Innumerable similar analogies could be given, but they are all imperfect and in reality explain nothing.

B. The Doctrine of the Two Natures of Christ

Another doctrine taught in the Bible which could never have been discovered by the unaided human reason is the doctrine of the divine-human natures united in one Person in Christ. The Bible teaches that the Eternal Son of God, who was co-equal with God the Father, voluntarily took upon himself the nature of a man, in addition to his divine nature, and yet that these two natures are united in one unitary divine-human Person. Now it is impossible for the human reason to reach such a conclusion unaided, and the Person of Christ is one of the puzzles of theology. We know that Christ was and is all that God is, and at the same time all that man is. The description of Christ given us in the Bible is of such a unitary Person with two natures. This did not mean that part of the time he was God and part of the time man, nor did it mean that he was man and by perfect living so exalted himself that at last he became God. Nor, on the other hand, does it

mean that we are all a part of God but that Christ became supremely a part of God so that there was far more of God's nature in him than in the rest of humanity. These modern theories of the Person of Christ have no foundation in the teachings of the Bible.

It means that the preëxistent Second Person of the Trinity as a transcendent Being added to his nature and person the complete nature of a man, so that at every moment thereafter he was both God and man. This much the Bible plainly teaches us, and this much we can vaguely grasp, but we could never have reached such a concept through the exercise of the human reason alone. We can partially understand it after it is revealed to us, but it is directly contrary to all that constitutes human experience outside of Christ.

The proofs of the trustworthiness of the Gospel documents are so convincing that we must accept their teachings about Christ too, even though his Person remains more or less a mystery to us. Of course it is possible, as in the case of the doctrine of the Trinity, to give illustrations which show that even in the realm of nature a thing can be two or more things at the same time, but such illustrations after all do not prove the truth of these doctrines, but simply make their uniqueness stand out all the more plainly. We can see that the reason why God sent His Son to earth to die for us was that only by such a course could mankind be made holy and acceptable before God. That is the *purpose* of the incarnation, but it does not bring us any nearer the mysteries of the union of the two natures in one Person. We must admit here too that, though the evidence proves the *fact* of the incarnation and of the two natures of Christ with one Person, if it were not that this doctrine is plainly taught in the Bible, or if the history of the life of Christ were not so convincingly trustworthy, we would not be able to believe it.

C. The Doctrine of the Atonement

And when we take up the doctrine of the Atonement of Christ, we are not much better off than in the case of the two doctrines mentioned above. Who could have prophesied that the Holy Son of God would have died in our place and purchased our redemption with his own lifeblood? The rule of nature is that every man shall suffer for his own sins, and it would be impossible for us to accept this wonderful fact of redemption without the revelation of its truth in the Bible. Here again we must rest our belief in the doctrine upon our conviction that the Bible comes to us with divine authority. We read the explanations in

the New Testament of this wonderful doctrine and find that its facts are comparatively easily understood, but who can grasp the truth of the Atonement in all its horror, and love, and glory? It is far too wonderful a thing to grasp in all its fullness, but we understand enough to *believe* and to appropriate the wonderful gift of eternal life, purchased at so dear a cost, as our own, and return unceasing thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of his Son as our Saviour and Redeemer!

D. The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Our Lord

Many men profess themselves unable to accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of our Lord, because it would involve a biological miracle. Of course this assumes that miracles are impossible, and dodges the whole question. If miracles are possible, then it becomes merely a question of fact as to whether Christ's birth was such a miracle or not. A fact of history must be discovered by evidence and decided by evidence. Historical investigation alone will show it. As far as any historical investigation is concerned, the facts of the Virgin Birth of our Lord are as well established as those of any other event in the New Testament. From a philosophical point of view, if God intended to cause the incarnation of His Son, the Virgin Birth is the most logical way of bringing it about. Doubtless God might have incarnated His Son in a child born of human parents if He had chosen to do so, but it would then have been more difficult to believe in the deity of our Lord. Also, if Christ had been born of human parents it would be rather hard to see how he could have escaped the burden of condemnation resting on the human race because of Adam's sin, and thus hard to see how he could have escaped actual sin, though doubtless even then God could have miraculously brought such a result about had He chosen to do so. Therefore the Virgin Birth was the logical and natural means of uniting the two natures, of bringing the human nature into the Person of the pre-existent Christ, in union with the divine nature. Of course we cannot explain how such a miracle was performed any more than we can explain how any miracle occurs, but we cannot doubt the fact that it did occur and accept the truth of the New Testament.

E. The Doctrine of Predestination

One of the greatest stumbling blocks for unbelievers and even for some Christians is the doctrine of predestination. The Bible teaches that God has not only *foreknown* all things but actually foreordained

whatsoever comes to pass. This includes all the events in nature, not merely the beautiful opening of a rose, and the songs of birds, but the catastrophes of nature in all their terror and horror. But it also includes all the free actions of man, both good and bad. It includes the predestination of some to everlasting life and the predestination of some to everlasting punishment for their sins. "He holds the whole wide world in his hands."

Among the problems connected with predestination none is more difficult than the relation between predestination and the free agency of man. How can man be free to act and at the same time have every action predestined by God? How can man have any responsibility for his sinful actions if God predestines everything? One thing is certain, and that is that whether we can explain it satisfactorily or not, the Bible teaches that man is free to act according to his nature, and that God does hold him responsible for all his actions.

Perhaps a little relief for this problem is as follows: man is *free* to act *when he can do what he wants to do!* God's control and predestination enter into the reasons *why* man does what we wants to do. God controls the *springs* of man's desires and the external circumstances and the material atoms and molecules that constitute his body. The man who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit naturally wants to obey God, so of course God controls his life. The man who is spiritually dead in sin naturally wants to do only evil things, so God limits and circumscribes all his evil desires and activities, causing everything to work together for the plan of God.

Another difficult problem is that of sin. How can a good God predestine sinful actions of man? Does not that make God the author of sin? The Bible teaches that God is not the author of sin and that man is responsible for all his sinful actions. This is hard to understand, but the Bible teaches that the most wicked act of history, the betrayal and crucifixion of our Lord, was nevertheless predestined by God for the salvation of His people. If that greatest of sins was predestined for a great purpose, then the lesser sins of mankind can be fitted into the plan of God! Though God has a reason, usually unknown to us, for permitting every sinful act, that does not make the act less sinful or take away the responsibility of man for his sin. Man is commanded not to sin; he is warned of the results of his sin; he is told of the punishment for sin; but he is permitted to sin for unknown reasons, though the effects are all overruled according to the plan of God.

Whether we like it or not, and whether we can understand it or not, the Bible clearly teaches predestination, and we had better understand and accept that fact and shape our lives accordingly. Nevertheless we could not accept the doctrine were we not convinced that God has revealed it in the Bible and foreordains whatsoever comes to pass for His own glory. We should never equate this doctrine with the pagan doctrine of fate. Fate teaches that man is in the cogwheels of a blind, implacable doom, while predestination teaches that we are in the hands of a warm, loving heavenly Father, who so loved us that he gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross to redeem us from eternal damnation.

F. The Doctrine of Inspiration

Probably no other doctrine of the Bible is as little understood and as grossly misrepresented as the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. This doctrine does not teach that God dictated the Scriptures as a businessman would dictate to a stenographer. Nor does it teach that all parts of the Bible are of equal value as revealing religious truth. It teaches that the Holy Spirit so guided and controlled the men who wrote the Old and New Testaments in the original languages that what they wrote was *true* and the truth God wanted His people to have. The Holy Spirit supervised the men who were writing, while they were writing, in such a way that, while they were left in full possession of their own faculties and could choose their own sources and their own style and vocabulary, they were nevertheless prevented from writing what was not *true*, and led to select just the facts God wanted His people to have. That made each book of the Bible thoroughly human but at the same time completely God's Word. Sometimes God's Spirit gave them direct revelations, so that they wrote exactly what God told them to write, but usually the Holy Spirit led them to study historical sources, recall the words of Christ in the Gospels, and understand deep theological doctrines. But in whatever form they were writing, whether poetry as in the Psalms, or wise sayings as in the Proverbs, or sermons such as we find in the writings of the prophets, always the Holy Spirit kept them from all error, whether of historical fact, scientific statement, symbols, prophecy, or the words that were spoken. The net result in the original language was that it was not only true but the truth God wanted His people to have.

Some parts of the Bible seem of little religious value compared to

other parts, which are priceless for teaching doctrinal truth. But the whole Bible is true—and the truth written for our instruction and guidance. This is what the doctrine of Inspiration teaches. It is what the Bible teaches. It is a doctrine that is peculiarly open to proof. If the Bible were not true its enemies could overthrow the doctrine, but if it *is* true, as it is, then all the other doctrines of the Bible are also true. We have shown in previous chapters that there is no good reason to doubt the truth of the Scriptures, and if that is the case, and the documents of the Bible are historically trustworthy, then the doctrine of Inspiration is proved thereby to be *true*.

V. CONCLUSION

It is unnecessary to take up in detail the other doctrines of the Bible. As has already been said, they rest on the prior question of whether the Bible is true and is the Word of God. If the Bible is the Word of God, it is the duty of Christians to accept its teachings and doctrines no matter how distasteful to the sinful heart they may be. If God has revealed them, they are rational regardless of what we may think about them or how impossible it may seem to prove their truth or to reconcile them with the rational side of man's nature. The Christian on that point falls back on faith in a rational God, who can and does resolve the seemingly irrational mysteries, in His infinite knowledge and power in heaven. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

I. INTRODUCTION. STATUS OF OUR ARGUMENT

The preceding five chapters have been concerned chiefly with the refutation of objections to the claim that the Bible is the Word of God and that Christianity is the only true religion. In them we have shown that the documents of the Old and New Testaments are in all probability almost exact copies of the original manuscripts, and that the insignificant errors of transmission in no wise affect the trustworthiness of the documents. We have shown that the original writers were in all probability the men who were said to have written the different books; that they were prophets, apostles, and apostolic men writing under the direction of the apostles, so that the claim that they wrote under the supervision and control of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to keep their writings free from error seems reasonable and probably true. We have shown that the alleged discrepancies in the Bible disappear before careful and sympathetic examination of the text itself. And we have shown lastly that the doctrines are such as we would expect to be taught in a book which claimed to contain a divine revelation.

All of this makes it probable that the claim that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, and that Christianity is therefore the only true religion, is true and well founded while the objections to that claim are shown to be without basis and false. We have reserved until last the two strongest proofs that the Bible is the Word of God and that Christianity is true. We believe that in fulfilled prophecy and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have positive proof that our claims are true. We believe we can convince anyone whose mind is open to evidence that we have as much positive proof, and of just as strong a character, that the Bible and its contents are true and in very truth the Word of God as we have that the Declaration of Independence was a genuine docu-

ment produced in 1776 in Philadelphia by representatives of the thirteen colonies. Exactly the same kind of evidence is available for the one as for the other. No one now living was alive at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, so if we must trust in documentary evidence in the one case, we must trust in documentary evidence in the other case. In only one particular are the two cases different. We have the autographed manuscript of the Declaration of Independence, and do not have the autographs of the Bible. But in the case of the Bible we have an institution, the Christian Church, that was founded upon and can be traced back to the New Testament facts, and this line of evidence is as convincing as the autographs would be.

II. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MIRACLES

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was different from all other miracles in that *it constituted the basic fact upon which the Christian Church was founded*. It would have made little difference to the Christian Church whether Christ had performed any of the other miracles or not, though the fact that he did perform them gives us a richer understanding of Christ's nature. Of course the other miracles helped the disciples to believe in Jesus, and probably in a degree prepared their minds to accept the greatest miracle of all, his resurrection, but, after all, the church could probably have gotten along without them individually had any one of them never happened.

But in the miracle of the resurrection of Christ the case is entirely different. Had there been no resurrection *there would have been no Christian Church!* The Christian Church as we know it was founded absolutely on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and all that it implied! Of course it is precarious to argue about what *might* have followed had an event *not* happened that *did* happen, and it is of course possible that God would have taken some other way to found the church had not Christ risen from the dead in the way he did rise. Nevertheless, the only church we know anything about is the church which actually was founded after the resurrection of Christ, and that church, with the ideas which it had, would never have been founded and could not have existed in that form for a moment without the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ was the fact that gave the disciples the convincing proof which they needed that he was the Son of God, and that

all his other claims were true. It constituted the imperial seal of the Lord God Almighty on the life, work, and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Most of all, the resurrection of Christ proved that his redemption purchased on Calvary was of actual value and efficacy to all who trusted in the name of the Saviour, or, in other words, that salvation through faith in Jesus Christ actually *saved*! The work of the Holy Spirit in his ordinary saving manifestations depended on the conscious apprehension of the *fact* of that redemption, and on trust in the Redeemer, but without the resurrection such trust would have been inconceivable.

It was possible to trust a *living* Christ who had overcome the bonds of death, and it was possible to believe that faith in *him* would obtain pardon and salvation for the believer, but however much they may have loved a *dead* Christ before his death, and however much they may have revered his memory, their attitude would not have been other than that of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, when they said, "We *hoped* that it was he who should redeem Israel," and implied in that statement was also the thought, "but now he is *dead*!" It was the conviction that Christ *had* risen from the dead that changed the disciples' whole mental attitude, vitalized their wills, and sent them forth as bold and confident witnesses who carried the gospel message of salvation through faith in a crucified and risen Saviour throughout the Mediterranean world.

Plainly, therefore, in dealing with the resurrection of Christ we are dealing with a miracle which differs from all other miracles in that it is the foundation of an institution which exists today. The Christian Church can trace an authentic and unbroken line of descent back through the nineteen hundred years to Pentecost, and during these nineteen hundred and more years the belief in the resurrection has never weakened in the Church Universal. This renders the resurrection of Christ a fact which, though it is the most stupendous fact in history, is, nevertheless, one of the easiest facts in history to prove.

III. NECESSITY OF EXPLAINING THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS IN SOME MANNER

The Christian Church as an institution is before our eyes. It believes in the bodily resurrection of Christ. When and how did the Church of Christ arise? When and how did the *belief* in the resurrection enter the Christian Church? The history of the Christian Church back to

the end of the first century A.D. is an unbroken current so well authenticated that it is never seriously challenged by even the most radical historians. Wherever we test the stream of church history we always find the belief in the resurrection of Christ as one of the cardinal doctrines of the faith. But that is not all. We find in the proper repository, namely, the Christian Church, a group of documents, called collectively the New Testament, purporting to have been written by or under the direction of the apostles who founded the Christian Church. These documents contain accounts which explain how the Christian Church came into existence and upon what beliefs it was founded.

According to these documents it was the resurrection of Christ that produced a mental revolution in the minds of the disciples resulting in the formation of the Christian Church. Now this is an adequate explanation of both the founding of the Christian Church and the origin of the *belief* in the resurrection of Christ, namely, in the *fact* of the resurrection. However, if this account of the origin of the Christian Church is rejected, and the fact of the resurrection denied, both must be adequately explained in some other way, for both *demand* adequate explanations. Outside the New Testament there are no rival historical accounts of Christianity and the resurrection which attempt to explain the origin either of Christianity or of the belief in the resurrection. The documents themselves bear every mark of trustworthy history. The Gospel accounts can be reconciled if we consider them fairly. In the Gospels are four independent accounts of the resurrection and the resurrection appearances. They agree in all important particulars, and yet they clearly represent four different eyewitness reports bearing all the marks of honesty and reliability which constitute the essential characteristics of trustworthy testimony in a law court.¹ Moreover, in the other documents of the New Testament, particularly in the major Epistles of Paul, we find similar trustworthy evidence of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now here is a great body of evidence which on the face of it gives an accurate and believable account of the origin of Christianity and bases it on the fact of Christ's resurrection. What is the reason it cannot be accepted as the true account? If it is not so accepted, what counterevidence can be presented to prove that it is false? As has been said, no counterevidence from that period can be presented. The only

¹ C. R. Morrison, *The Proof of Christ's Resurrection from a Lawyer's Standpoint*.

basis upon which the facts can be challenged is the *opinion* of skeptics that such a miracle could not happen! Because of their *opinion*, unsupported by historical evidence, they seek to overthrow all this testimony to the fact of the resurrection. Recognizing that their opinion will have little weight unless they can show a plausible explanation for the origin of Christianity other than the supernatural explanation of the New Testament, their efforts have been bent in two directions. They have first attempted to show other sources for the ideas of Christianity which might be said to give a plausible explanation of the origin of Christianity, and they have then tried to account for the origin of the belief in the resurrection of Christ, which no critic attempts to deny has always been present in the New Testament Christian Church, by attempting to explain away the *fact* of the resurrection.

IV. DOCUMENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NOT REJECTED BECAUSE THEY SHOW EVIDENCE OF FORGERY

Now the basis for this rejection of the New Testament is not on the grounds of literary and historical criticism. It cannot be shown to be inaccurate history wherever it has been tested by external evidence. All the internal evidence supports the integrity and genuineness of the documents. The universal tradition of the early church is in favor of their truth and historicity. No contrary evidence even of the enemies of Christianity is worth a moment's consideration. The only basis for doubting the accounts of the resurrection is in the denial of the possibility of miracle. We have already shown in Chapter V that this is illogical if a person believes in a personal God. The whole question of theism is dodged when the possibility of miracle is denied.

But even on an abstract supposition that miracle is impossible, the origin of the Christian Church must be accounted for adequately, and, as was shown in Chapter XIV, all such attempts have failed. Thus the only alternative for the critics is to accept the New Testament record of the supernatural origin of Christianity based on the fact of Christ's resurrection. This in itself on historical grounds overthrows the philosophical objection to the account on the ground that a miracle cannot happen, for the only adequate explanation of the fact of the Christian Church is that this miracle *did* happen!

V. THEORIES WHICH ATTEMPT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION BY THE EARLY CHURCH

Nor are the skeptics who deny the fact of the resurrection any more successful when it comes to explaining how the belief could have arisen in the Christian Church if the resurrection had not indeed happened. No one at this time seriously questions that the early Christians *believed* that Christ had risen from the dead. If he did not rise, how did the early Christians come to believe that he did? A number of explanations have been given by skeptics and all possible logical alternatives canvassed.

A. *Swoon Theory*

According to the swoon theory, Christ did not actually die on the cross but simply swooned from the pain and torture. He was believed to be dead by all, both friends and enemies, was buried in the tomb, and on the third day came to life, pushed back the stone, and appeared to his friends, who spread the report that he had risen from the dead. Instances of coma or suspended animation are cited as analogical proofs.

This theory evades the facts of the record and the historical customs of the time. We must remember that Christ was being *crucified* by his enemies. According to the custom of the time, a person was never taken down from the cross until it was certain that death had occurred. The body was always guarded until death took place. Now in the case of Jesus, his side, over his heart, was pierced with a spear, forming a hole large enough for a hand to enter (John 20:27). The object of the piercing of his side was to rupture the heart and so cause death in case death had not already occurred. But death *had already* occurred, as was proved by the blood and watery fluid which flowed forth. This was brought about by the breaking of his heart, which would produce just such a result, according to medical men.² Here is conclusive proof of the actual death of Christ.

But suppose, for the sake of argument, that he had swooned. He was in a tomb without food or drink, shut in by a great stone in front of the entrance, with soldiers of the Roman Empire on guard without. Are we to suppose that a person whose hands and feet had been torn by nails, whose head was a mass of wounds from the crown of thorns,

² Stroud, *The Physical Cause of Christ's Death*.

and whose side had a great gaping hole from whence had flowed his heart's blood could gather strength after three days without sustenance to roll away a stone so large that it took several men to roll it into place? And if he succeeded, what about the soldiers who had been placed there to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and claiming that Jesus had arisen? All this is so incredible that it has been abandoned by serious investigators. But remember that if this theory be accepted, it destroys the belief in the honesty of Jesus, for Jesus prophesied his death many times and also prophesied his resurrection. Last of all, if it be true, what became of Jesus after forty days? Why was not his death shown to have occurred at a later time? All these objections to the theory are insurmountable and have led to its abandonment even by skeptics.

B. *The Theft of the Body by Friends*

Next in line comes the theory which the Jews urged the soldiers to proclaim by promising protection to them. According to the story which the Jews persuaded the soldiers to tell, the disciples came by night and stole the body while the soldiers were asleep. A variation of this theory is that of Klausner: "Joseph of Arimathaea, therefore, secretly removed the body at the close of Sabbath and buried it in an unknown grave; and since he was, according to the Gospels, 'one of the disciples of Jesus,' . . . there was some measure of truth in the report spread by the Jews."³

The theory involves two impossibilities. First, soldiers of a Roman legion, as a group, would never sleep, at a task entrusted to them, when the very conditions of the task demanded wakefulness. They had been placed at the tomb for the express purpose of preventing the theft of the body. They knew that sleep would mean death to the Roman soldier who thus disobeyed orders. Are we to suppose that, knowing those facts, a *squad* of Roman soldiers would *all* so neglect their duties as to go to sleep? Such a thing was unthinkable in regard to the rigidly disciplined Roman legionaries! One soldier might drop off to sleep for a few minutes while on duty, but a whole squad, never!

³ Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 357. Klausner seems to be uncertain about the whole matter of the resurrection, for in one place (pp. 81-82) he seems to approve a theory that Luke gave Jesus a drug to make him insensible to the pain, and, after stealing the body, restored him out of the trance. He eventually seems to accept the vision theory of the appearances of Jesus (p. 359).

But even were we to suppose that the impossible happened, and that a squad of Roman legionaries slept while on duty, a second and even greater impossibility remains. We are asked to believe that the whole group of disciples, who afterwards spent their lives in the proclamation of a gospel that demanded the highest type of moral character and truth and honesty, and whose lives bore out their beliefs, their enemies being witness, actually founded their whole gospel on something they *knew* to be a falsehood! To say with Klausner that Joseph of Arimathaea removed the body secretly is impossible, for the soldiers were on guard. Afterward, too, since he was a secret disciple, when the disciples preached Jesus' resurrection he would have disillusioned them, or if he recanted, he would have produced the body to the other Jews and so confounded the disciples. A person has only to read the New Testament to become certain that such men, with the highest ethical standards the world has ever known, could never have spent their lives preaching that which they knew to be a lie. But as a climax of all we are asked to believe that these men would give *their lives* for what they knew to be false! Men and women have died for false causes before, in the history of the world, but they died believing that they were true. However, we are asked to believe that James and Stephen and Peter and the rest died as martyrs to a cause which they knew in their hearts to be founded on a lie! It is little wonder that few even among the skeptics would own this theory today. What has been said about this explanation would apply equally to the view that nothing happened to the body of Jesus, but that the disciples went to another tomb, which they found empty, and began to preach his resurrection. In such a case the matter would have been even more difficult because all the Jews would have had to do was go to the real tomb and produce the body of Jesus in order to overthrow the claims of the disciples. These views are absolutely impossible and are not widely held.

C. The Theft of the Body by Enemies

Even less tenable is the theory that the body was stolen by some of the enemies of Jesus. In the first place there was absolutely no motive for such a theft on the part of the officials, while other people could not have gotten near the tomb because of the guards. In the second place, had they done so they would have produced the body when the disciples claimed that Jesus had risen. This theory, like the others, is abandoned by skeptics today.

D. *The Vision Theory*

One of the theories widely held at the present time⁴ by those who do not believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus is that the disciples were perfectly sincere in their belief that Christ had risen from the dead because they received a *supernatural vision* of Christ in his glorified state, though his body actually remained in the tomb. Thus no fraud is charged either to the disciples or to Jesus, for Jesus is said never to have intended his disciples to think that his body had actually risen from the tomb; he simply wished them to know that his spirit actually continued as an immortal soul, in which form he would always be with them. This is sometimes referred to as the view that Christ's resurrection was a *spiritual one*, not a *bodily resurrection*.

There are two principal objections to this view. In the first place it supposes a miracle to get rid of a miracle! The only objection to the bodily resurrection theory is that it is a miracle in the physical realm and violates a natural law, which according to the skeptic cannot happen. But a supernatural vision would require just as great a miracle and would be just as great a violation of natural law as the bodily resurrection. The second principal objection is that it does not do justice to the empty tomb. When the disciples began to preach the actual physical resurrection, the first thing their enemies, the Jews, would have done would have been to produce the body and show that the disciples were mistaken in thinking that Jesus' body had risen. If they had done this the whole movement would have collapsed.

Then of course a third objection, which will have weight with those who believe that the records are more or less reliable, is that the theory does not do justice to the general facts of the Gospel accounts. According to these accounts the disciples actually thought they saw a vision, and that he was just a spirit, until he convinced them that he had a material body by allowing them to handle him and by eating in their presence. He thus gave the disciples convincing proof that what they saw was not a supernatural vision or a spirit, but that they were actually having verbal intercourse with their risen Lord in his resurrected physical body. This theory breaks down at these three points.

E. *The Spiritualistic Theory*

A still more incredible theory is that Jesus was a spiritist medium, and that what the disciples actually saw was the plastic body material-

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

ized from the unseen world by means of the superhuman powers of the disembodied spirit of Jesus. There are several objections to this view.

First, it assumes the validity of supernatural phenomena, which removes the principal ground for rejecting the Gospel records on this point.

Second, as far as we know, these manifestations of the risen Lord all occurred in broad daylight, except the interviews with the disciples in the upper room. So-called spiritist phenomena always happen at night. Since Jesus appeared in the daylight it was perfectly possible for doubting Thomas and the rest of the disciples to find out whether the body they saw was the real body of Jesus or a plastic materialization of his spirit. The disciples were convinced that it was the real body of Jesus, and there is no evidence to show that it was not.

Lastly, this theory, like the one above, is open to the objection of the empty tomb, which is a fatal one. What became of the body of Jesus if it was not raised? If it still remained, why did not the enemies produce it?

F. The Optical Illusion Theory

Another theory attempts to account for what the disciples thought they saw on purely naturalistic grounds. The disciples were victims of optical illusions in the external world, brought about by their attitude of expectancy and their intense hope that Jesus would actually arise from the dead as he said he would. They saw a "ghost," as we would say in modern times—not a real spirit but the physical manifestation produced by some other cause, though attributed by them, in their psychic condition of hysteria, to what they were expecting, namely, the risen Lord.

The difficulty with this theory is that it, too, dodges the facts. The appearances were all, except two, in daylight, and ghosts always are thought to appear at night. The disciples were not in hysterical frames of mind, nor were they expecting the risen Lord to appear to them. To us perhaps it seems incomprehensible that they were not expecting him to rise from the dead, in view of all his prophecies that he would arise, but the fact of the matter was that they were *not* expecting him, so that there was no psychological preparation, as the theory postulates. A "ghost" could not eat and drink with the disciples, nor could it be handled.

Most important of all, the theory is wrecked on the fact of the empty

tomb. If Jesus' body was in the tomb, while they saw a "ghost," and began to preach the bodily resurrection of Jesus, why did not the Jews produce the body? Something happened to the body, and as we have already pointed out, the theory of theft is entirely inadequate in the face of the facts.

G. The Hallucination Theory

This theory is more or less similar to the one just treated, except that according to this view the illusion was not in the external world but in their own minds. The difference between an optical illusion, a vision, and a hallucination is that while the former two are in the external world, the last is entirely in the mind of the individual. A drunkard thinks he sees snakes, but they are all in his mind. The disordered condition of the mind from hysteria, or mental derangement, either temporary or permanent, produces the idea that an object is seen which has no actual existence in the external world, apart from the mind that has the experience.

One of the great difficulties with this theory is the fact that *five hundred* people all saw Jesus at the same time! Now it may be possible for two or three people to have the same hallucination at the same time, but not five hundred. That would stretch probabilities to the breaking point. A whole asylum of insane patients may have hallucinations at the same time, but the hallucinations will all be different.

Then, like the other theories we have just considered, this theory collapses on the empty tomb! As long as we can forget the empty tomb we can spin theories, but this cold fact wrecks the theory. When Christians began to preach the resurrection of Christ the Jews would have moved heaven and earth to produce the dead body of Jesus. The fact that they could not do so is convincing refutation of these theories.

H. Incidental Confirmation

We have examined all logical possibilities in the case and found insuperable objections to each theory. The only remaining hypothesis is that the New Testament is correct and that Jesus actually rose bodily from the tomb. There are a number of interesting confirmations which incidentally attest the truth of the narrative. The napkin was folded at one side of the tomb. If the enemies had taken the body they would either have taken the grave clothes or not have troubled to fold the napkin carefully. If the disciples had taken the body they would never

have removed the grave clothes. If a merely human Jesus had recovered from a swoon, he would not have left the tomb without the grave clothes, for modesty would have prevented him from going forth naked. But if the Son of God rose in an incorruptible body, clothed in power from on high, clothes were superfluous, and the stately majesty of deity could take the time to fold the napkin which loving hands had wrapped around his head. That was an act fitting for the Son of God rising in power and glory and is one of the strongest incidental confirmations of the narrative.

VI. CONCLUSION

We have examined all possibilities and find that the only conclusion possible is that Christ actually rose from the dead. If he did rise, that fact carries with it, as was said at the beginning of this chapter, all the implications of supernatural Christianity. It is a fact that trails clouds of glory through our Christianity. Nothing but a supernatural Saviour is possible after he has risen from the dead. His resurrection establishes beyond a doubt the truth of Christianity. But not only does it prove that Christianity is the one true religion. It also proves that all that Christ said and did was true, and this in turn proves that the Bible is the Word of God written.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

I. INTRODUCTION. FULFILLED PROPHECY PROVES THE BIBLE TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

As was said in the last chapter, the two most conclusive proofs that the Bible is the Word of God and that Christianity is true are found in the resurrection of Christ and in the fulfillment of prophecy. The first was presented in the last chapter and is so powerful in its certainty that the whole case for Christianity and the Bible might very well be rested upon that proof alone. To make certainty doubly sure, we will here present the second line of convincing proof.

In Chapter V, we saw that there were two ways in which God could attest to revelation to man, namely, by miracle and by fulfilled prophecy. Miracles are of principal value to the people before whom they are performed. Prophecy is of principal value to the people of later years who can see its fulfillment. Now in order that we may appreciate just what fulfilled prophecy would prove, let us see whether it would be possible for a man of keen insight and good intellect to foretell future events with any degree of accuracy.

A. Impossibility of Foretelling Future Events Accurately

Let us try to place ourselves back in history before the rise of communism and before World War I. That would be in the early 1900's. What chance would there be of an accurate foretelling of events in the 1940's? Let us take several outstanding events of the period 1940-1960, a span of only twenty years. (1) The First World War was a war to end war, yet less than twenty-five years later the Second World War, a far greater conflict eventuated. (2) In the period 1900-1910 the Czar was all-powerful in Russia. The whole United States budget for the first time exceeded \$1,000,000,000. The United States Navy sailed

around the world. Kaiser Wilhelm was cracking his whip at the rest of Europe. Who could have prophesied then that Germany would be defeated in a great world war? Or that the Czar of Russia would be dethroned, that the Bolsheviks would be the ones to bring about his downfall, but that the Kerensky government would be overthrown in turn by a handful of communists called Bolsheviks, who would establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and eventually murder the Czar and the royal family? Who could have prophesied that one of the leaders, Trotsky, would be exiled, and, decades later, murdered by a communist agent? (3) Who could have prophesied the rise of Mussolini and Adolph Hitler? Who could then have prophesied that, after Hitler had plunged the world into war, Communist Russia would become an ally of the United States? Who could have prophesied that World War II would be ended by the development of the atom bomb and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Who could have prophesied that after World War II Berlin would be free but surrounded by the power of Communist Russia? (4) Who could have prophesied that the hydrogen bomb would be developed, by both the United States and the U.S.S.R., that the communists would control China, that Communist Russia would launch the first satellite, and that eventually Russia would be the first to put a man into orbit around the earth?

As we read over that modest list of important events we can see that even so recently as the period 1900-1910 no one could have foretold even these few. True prophecy of future events is impossible for man. In the scientific world in the first half of the twentieth century, radio, television, the automobile, electronics, and airplanes are outstanding achievements which could not have been prophesied a hundred years ago.

Now suppose that prophecies of all these things had been made in 1900. Would we not have to say that only supernatural knowledge could have made them possible?

Yet the Biblical prophets prophesied over and over again events that were not to take place until hundreds of years later. They foretold them in such detail that it would be absolutely impossible for their prophecies to have been fulfilled unless they had received a revelation from God! God alone knows the future, and the future can be revealed only by God.

When, therefore, we find a book unquestionably written hundreds of years before the prophecies recorded in it were fulfilled, can there be any question that these future events were revealed by God Himself? The prophecies which we shall cite will be those so detailed that there will be no question that they were actually prophesied, and we shall show that no man could possibly have known or even guessed that the events prophesied would take place, unless he had been speaking as the mouthpiece of God.

In order to make the argument convincing we will dwell briefly on the incidents surrounding the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and then at greater length on less familiar prophecies, which *must* have been written centuries before their fulfillment, and about the time of whose fulfillment there can be no doubt. The prophecies about Jesus Christ are no less marvelous though the fact of their fulfillment is comparatively well known. Consider the prophecy that he would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), and that his name would be called Immanuel (God with us). Though modernists have tried to translate *almah* as "a young woman" not "virgin," the common Old Testament word for a young woman was *bethulah* while the word *almah* was used only two other times in the Old Testament, Genesis 24:43 and Song of Songs 1:3, in both of which places the meaning is clearly that of "virgin." Jesus Christ was indeed "God with us" on the earth, when he was born of the Virgin Mary.

1. The place of his birth, Bethlehem, was prophesied in Micah 5:2.
2. The dividing of his clothes and the casting of lots for the seamless garment was prophesied in Psalm 22:18.
3. The piercing of his hands and his feet was prophesied in Psalm 22:16.
4. Though the leg bones of the two robbers were broken by the soldiers, as was customary in crucifying criminals, they did not break the bones of Jesus, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "Not a bone of his shall be broken" (Exod. 12:46).
5. When they pierced the side of Christ as he hung on the cross, the words "they shall look on him whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10) were fulfilled.
6. His resurrection was prophesied in Psalm 16:10.
7. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is filled with prophecies about Christ that were fulfilled in his earthly ministry and death.

8. It has been said that there are over three hundred prophecies about Christ that were fulfilled in his earthly ministry and death and resurrection.

9. In fact it is not too much to say that Jesus Christ is the very center of Old Testament prophecy, as the angel said to John in Revelation 19:10: "... for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." As Dr. Gaebelien so well expressed it: "... *the vitalizing factor of prophecy, its underlying spirit, is to testify of Jesus.* It is well in considering this truth to look back to the original meaning of the name of our Lord. Jesus means, 'Saviour.' The testimony of the Saviour, the story of salvation, then is the central theme of prophecy."¹ Jesus himself expressed this fact in John 5:39: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

B. Prophecies About Tyre and Sidon

1. *Tyre.* In the twenty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel there are a number of detailed prophecies about Tyre. Its total destruction was prophesied, and the details of the siege under Nebuchadnezzar are graphically foretold. Though this has every appearance of being actual prophecy, and though the traditional date of Ezekiel is sometime before the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, many critics would say that this picture of the siege was written after the event and not before, so we shall pass over the details of the siege and not press the claim of what we have no doubt was the case, namely, that these events were actual prophecies. But several verses scattered through this chapter are worthy of special notice. In the twelfth verse are the words "and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the waters."

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the main city of Tyre was on the mainland, though apparently there was a fortified city upon the island about half a mile from the shore. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the mainland city for thirteen years and finally captured it, though before its fall the Tyrians removed most of their possessions to the island city. The old city was destroyed by the victorious army of Nebuchadnezzar, but its ruins stood for two centuries and a half, for the Tyrians decided to live only on the island where their fleet could protect them, and therefore the city on the mainland was not rebuilt. For two centuries and a half the ruins stood on the coast of the Mediterranean within sight of the prosperous island city, and apparently there was no sign that the

¹ Frank E. Gaebelien, *Exploring the Bible*, p. 154.

words quoted above would ever be fulfilled. Who would be so foolish as to expend the useless labor required to throw these ruins into the waters of the sea?

But at last Alexander the Great led his victorious armies to the coast and sought to attack the city. He had no ships capable of meeting the great fleet of the Tyrians, and there seemed no way by which the city could be taken. After a consultation with the officers of his army he decided to construct a causeway across the half-mile of deep water and make a direct attack upon the high walls of the city. And now the prophecies which had waited so long for their fulfillment were literally accomplished. The stones and dust of the ruined city were carried to the shore and laid "in the midst of the waters." A causeway had been built almost to the island when the Tyrians with their fleet attacked the workmen, defeated them, and destroyed the work which Alexander had been so long in building!

Once more the indomitable conqueror set about the almost impossible task. Gathering a fleet from the neighboring cities, he placed a guard upon the Tyrian harbor to prevent another sortie and, under the protection of his ships, started to rebuild the causeway. The remainder of the ruins of what had been the older city were laid in the waters, and the very dust of the streets scraped into the sea, literally fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy!

But still this did not satisfy the full meaning of the prophecy. It was also written, "thou shalt be built no more" (26:14). Other cities destroyed by enemies had been rebuilt; Jerusalem, destroyed many times, has always risen again from the ruins. What reason was there for saying that Old Tyre might not be rebuilt? But twenty-five centuries ago a Jew in exile over in Babylonia looked into the future at the command of God and wrote the words, "thou shalt be built no more." The voice of God has spoken and Old Tyre today stands as it has for twenty-five centuries, a bare rock, uninhabited by man! Today anyone who wants to see the site of the old city can have it pointed out to him along the shore, but there is not a ruin to mark the place. It has been scraped clean and has never been rebuilt.

2. *Sidon*. Another city of that region also belonged to the Phoenicians. Older than Tyre was the rival of Tyre, Sidon. And there was another prophecy of Ezekiel, about Sidon: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Sidon; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall have executed judgments in her. . . . For

I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on every side" (28:22-23).

Notice here that it is not said that Sidon shall be destroyed and never be rebuilt, as in the case of Tyre, but that in a peculiar way the city will be a scene of bloodshed and slaughter. How was the prophecy fulfilled? In 351 B.C. the Sidonians, who were the vassals of the Persian king, rebelled, and successfully defended their city against his attacks. At last their own king, in order to save his life, betrayed the city to the enemy. Well knowing what the vengeance of the Persian king would be, forty thousand of the citizens shut themselves up in their homes, set fire to their own houses, and perished in the flames rather than submit to the torture of their enemies! Blood indeed was sent into her streets!

Sidon was soon rebuilt, however, and though it has been captured over and over again, its citizens butchered and houses razed time after time, the city has always been rebuilt. Today it is a town of over fifteen thousand inhabitants. Blood has flowed in the streets repeatedly, but the city stayed in existence and stands today, a monument to fulfilled prophecy.

Now suppose Tyre and Sidon had exchanged places in the prophecy. What a change there would be! Suppose it had been said of Sidon, "thou shalt be built no more"—what would have become of the prophecy? How did it happen that these prophecies were so exactly fulfilled in each case, and that their names were not exchanged in the prophecy? Can there be any other explanation save the fact that God spoke through Ezekiel?

C. Prophecies About Egypt and Its Cities

Let us now turn to the country which was one of the oldest and the seat of one of the highest types of civilization of the ancient world. The history of Egypt stretches back six thousand and more years to the very dawn of history, and always it has been the center of a highly developed civilization. Its manufactures were of such a quality that even today, with all the advances which we have made in science and skill, it is almost impossible to duplicate the quality of the articles turned out by the artisans of this wonderful land. For example there is linen made by the ancient Egyptians in existence today, which is so fine that it has 540 threads to the inch! In spinning also they were

unsurpassed, and Pliny says: "Some of the nets were so delicate that they would pass through a man's ring, and a single person could carry a sufficient number of them to surround a whole wood [a whole forest]." "Julius Lupus, who died while governor of Egypt, had some of these nets, each string of which had 150 threads; . . . the Rhodians preserve to this day in the temple of Minerva a linen corselet presented to them by Amasis, King of Egypt, whose threads are composed each of 365 fibres."²

In other branches of manufacture they were equally renowned, even to knowing all the secrets of the manufacture of glass and of imitation colored gems which could hardly be distinguished from natural ones. In medicine they were also notable, and the doctors of that day were familiar with much that we consider modern medicine. They specialized then as do physicians of today, oculists caring for the eyes, dentists for the teeth (using gold for filling), while other specialists were concerned with particular branches of the science. The astronomers and mathematicians of Egypt were familiar with principles which mathematicians of today still study. Sculpture and painting done by the Egyptians thousands of years ago seem marvelous even to us in the twentieth century. The colors of the paint they used remain fresh and vivid until the present time. Their mechanical skill and knowledge are attested by their wonderful pyramids and temples, the remains of which can be seen in Egypt today.

Every year the Nile, one of the longest rivers in the world, overflowed its banks and deposited a rich loam over the surrounding fields, making Egypt one of the most fertile lands in the world. An elaborate system of canals carried water from the Nile during the remaining months of the year to all the neighboring fields for irrigation purposes. The crops raised in the fertile and well-watered soil were so stupendous that they can hardly be believed even in the present day of scientific farming. Egypt was called the "granary of the world" in the time of Augustus Caesar, during the first century B.C. Its wealth was so fabulous that when Augustus conquered the country he paid off all the debts which he had contracted during the long war. Indeed after his spoilation of the land it was still so rich that he feared to entrust its control to a man of rank, lest he become rich enough to seize the throne from him (Augustus) and use Egypt as a stepping-stone to power. In order to protect himself, accordingly, Augustus placed a man

² John Urquhart, *The Wonders of Prophecy*, p. 57.

of low birth in command of the country. When the Arabs conquered Egypt in A.D. 638 it was still the richest land in the world, and when its capital at that time, Alexandria, was captured, its conqueror wrote to the caliph that he had captured a city containing 4,000 palaces, 400 theaters, and 12,000 shops where vegetables were sold! As for the government of the country, for the most part of 4,000 years at least before the Christian era, it was ruled by dynasties of native kings. Foreigners were particularly odious to the Egyptians, and they were the proudest people in regard to race in the world. During one dynasty when a race of rulers from Arabia overran the country, they were so despised and hated that their names were never referred to on the later monuments.

1. *Egypt to be diminished.* Now it was against such a land, at the very height of its power, after an unbroken history of 3,500 years during which she had had a king of her own, and had ruled in triumph over her own territory, that Ezekiel prophesied: "Egypt . . . and her cities . . . shall be a desolation forty years. . . . At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the peoples whither they were scattered; and I will bring back the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return . . . into the land of their birth; and they shall be there *a base kingdom*. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; . . . and I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations" (Ezek. 29:12-15). In other words, after a period of captivity and desolation of forty years under Nebuchadnezzar, the people were to be a base kingdom, despised among the nations, no more taking a leading part among them or ruling over them as they had done for so many hundred years in the past. Egypt was never again to be the leading kingdom of the world, and it was to be diminished.

a. *The unlikelihood of its fulfillment:* At the time this was written, nothing seemed more impossible of fulfillment than this strange prophecy! A nation which even then was at the height of its power, and which was disputing with the king of Babylon for the supremacy of western Asia, to be so humbled? It seemed unthinkable. And if by any chance Egypt should be conquered, might it not soon regain its power again, and reign once more in splendor? Or if that should not happen, was it not likely that the nation itself would be blotted out of existence, or be so merged with the conquerors that in a few centuries the original race would be lost sight of? Moreover, what seemed more

unlikely than that, if they were not to throw off the yoke of the conquerors, they should still have a king and exist as a kingdom? Was not that almost a paradox? And as a climax, note the peculiar doom of Egypt; it was to be diminished! It was to wither away! Not a sudden destruction but a gradual death!

b. *The fulfillment of the prophecy*: We must pause for a moment to notice the exact way in which the prophecies were fulfilled. After a period under Nebuchadnezzar when the Egyptians' power was humbled, they were again conquered, by the Persians, in 525 B.C. and for a hundred years were vassals of Persia. A short period of independence followed, but the Persians again crushed them, and ten years later, with the overthrow of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great, the Grecian kingdom of the Ptolemies was established in Egypt.

c. *"Strangers," "no native prince"*: We must notice another curious prophecy: "I will make the land desolate, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers." "And there shall be no more a prince from the land of Egypt" (Ezek. 30:12-13). Though the kingdom was to continue, it was to be ruled over by foreign princes, and the land itself was to be despoiled by the hand of strangers. This seems to imply that more than one nation was to rule the country, and that the conquerors were to lay waste the land. Now strange as it may seem, though Egypt has had a king for most of the time since the prophecy, not one king has been a native Egyptian! The last khedive was an alien. At present, Nasser, the ruler, is not a king.

This punishment was particularly odious for Egypt, when we remember that all strangers were an abomination to the Egyptians! Moreover, Egypt has had many different masters through the centuries since the time of the prophecy. First came the Babylonians, then the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks, the French, and the English, before Egypt was granted a precarious independence. All the foreign rulers have despoiled the land of its riches.

d. *Prophecies slowly fulfilled*: The peculiar doom of Egypt was that it was to be diminished, and the punishment was slow in falling. Though ruled by foreign princes, and continually plundered by strangers, the country continued prosperous and rich for many centuries into the Christian era. Century by century, however, it gradually shrank in importance, both politically and economically, until all the old wealth was gone, the people were poverty stricken, and the country was

reduced politically until it was indeed a base kingdom. Today Egypt plays only a minor part in history, and its people are sunk in poverty and degradation.

2. *Other prophecies about Egypt.* But the wonders of the prophecies about Egypt are not yet exhausted. In Ezekiel 30:12 are the words: "I will make the rivers dry," and in Isaiah 19:5-6 the words: "And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and become dry. And the rivers shall become foul; the canals of Egypt shall be diminished and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither away." The wealth of Egypt lay principally in the wonderful irrigation system throughout the whole country, which made it possible to raise such amazing crops each year. It was necessary to spend about a third of the revenue upon keeping the canals cleared of silt and their banks in order. This prophecy says that the canals shall be diminished and dried up. The prophecy was not fulfilled up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, but after that time the canals were neglected, and slowly filled up. Even the Nile itself today does not carry as much water as formerly, and the irrigation system, in spite of all the modern attempts to restore it to its former efficiency, carries water to only a small fraction of the former territory served by the canals. The prophecies have been literally fulfilled and the canals have been diminished and dried up.

a. *Papyrus and lotus plants:* In ancient times the river and canal banks were lined with papyrus and lotus plants, and manufacturing and utilizing these plants formed a great part of the industries of Egypt long into the Christian era. Today the plants are practically extinct in Egypt! The prophecy in Isaiah 19:6 said that the "reeds and flags shall wither away"! Today one of the most marked features of the river scenery in Egypt is the absence of foliage and reeds along the river bank. Who knew that this result would occur centuries later? Could anyone but God have prophesied it?

b. *The fisheries:* Another of the chief industries of Egypt was its fisheries. Down to the time of the Roman invasion the fisheries had lost none of their productiveness, but back in the time of Isaiah these words were written: "And the fishers shall lament, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish" (Isa. 19:8). Today the fisheries have ceased to be important and the fish of the river are few, another witness to prophecy!

c. *Thebes and Memphis*: Among the many other prophecies about Egypt, which have been strikingly fulfilled, we shall mention only two, particularly noticeable by their contrast. In ancient times the two principal cities, the capitals of Upper and Lower Egypt, were Thebes and Memphis. Thebes was one of the most magnificent cities the world ever saw. Even today, in their ruined condition, its temples and wonderful buildings are the marvel of all who see them. In Ezekiel 30:14-16 it is written: "I . . . will execute judgments upon No. . . . I will cut off the multitude of No . . . and No shall be broken up." No is the Biblical term for Thebes. Notice the peculiar fate which was to befall Thebes according to this prophecy: it was to be broken up. Judgments were to be executed upon the city, its multitudes cut off, and the city was to be broken up.

What does history tell us?

Thebes sank beneath two of the most terrible blows ever dealt by the hand of man. . . . Cambyses in 525 B.C. captured Thebes and poured out upon its devoted head the wrath of his insane ferocity. Its majestic temples were consumed by fire, and the power of the victorious host was bent to overthrow or to mar its colossal statues. Although the city sprang up again, it never regained its ancient splendor. . . . When the second stroke fell, at the beginning of the first century preceding the Christian era, it was still even then one of the wealthiest cities in the land. The blow was dealt by . . . the grandfather of Cleopatra, and the greatness that still remained to the ancient city can be measured by the fact that for three years it defied all the efforts of the besiegers. But the victor executed a terrible vengeance. It was almost entirely levelled to the ground and the words of the 14th and 15th verses found a complete fulfillment. God executed judgments in No: its multitude was cut off, and has never returned.³

(1) *Thebes to be broken up*. In the prophecy above quoted, perhaps the most remarkable words are "No shall be broken up." In other words, the city was to present an appearance which would fulfill this prophecy. Apparently Thebes was not to share the fate of so many other cities and be completely swept away, with nothing to mark its site save a few mounds or small ruins; it was to continue in a broken up condition. And how was the prophecy fulfilled? Today perhaps the most magnificent ruins in the world are found in Thebes, a marvelous monument to the splendor and glory of that ancient civilization. A

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

large portion of the ruins are above ground, and from them it is possible to get an idea of the area and wealth of the city. But the prophecy was fulfilled in another way besides the breaking up of the palaces and temples. The ruins are today apportioned among nine hamlets! They have existed in this broken and separated condition since the time of Strabo, in 25 B.C., and today offer a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. Thebes is indeed "broken up." Its palaces and temples are broken in pieces, and the city is broken into separate fragments.

(2) *Memphis*. In Ezekiel 30:13 are the words "I will also destroy the idols and I will cause the images to cease from Memphis." The most characteristic feature of this great capital city of Lower Egypt was its superb temples. The monuments are full of descriptions of its temples and idols, while its orders of priesthoods were famous throughout the ancient world. "It was not unfitting therefore that He who was to judge Egypt for its idolatry, as well as for its sin, should say of Memphis that He would destroy its idols and cause its images to cease from it. But though it might prove a fitting judgment, it was a most unlikely fate. The idols have not been destroyed elsewhere nor have the images ceased. Both are found today in Thebes, which was in ruins when Memphis still retained its splendor. They are found elsewhere, and from what we know of the general conditions of Egypt, we should say it was highly probable they would be found here also."⁴ At the beginning of the Christian era it was a large and prosperous city, the residence of the governor of Egypt at the time of the Arab invasion. Today Memphis has been so completely destroyed that up to the last century its very site was a matter of dispute. As for the idols, with the exception of a few broken and prostrate figures, and a number of sculptured fragments, the idols and images have completely ceased from Memphis! All those vast temples, with their majestic statues and paintings, have completely disappeared!

Now if we compare Memphis with Thebes, where the idols are still standing in great numbers, and where the images are still seen on the temple walls, the wonder of the fulfilled prophecy grows even more amazing. How did it happen that the prophecies about the two cities were not interchanged? How did it happen that it was not Thebes where the idols were destroyed, and Memphis which was to exist and yet be broken up? How did it happen that among all the ruined cities of Egypt Memphis was selected for the peculiar fate of having its idols

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

destroyed? Is there any answer except that the Lord God of Hosts spoke through the prophet, and that His word was fulfilled?

D. Babylon and Its Fate

Though there are many other remarkable prophecies which have been literally fulfilled in regard to Egypt, we must pass on to the great rival empire and civilization in the Euphrates Valley, Babylonia. There is a most marvelous prophecy about Babylon, in Isaiah 13:19-22: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. And howling creatures shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces."

1. *The glories of Babylon.* It hardly seems necessary to describe the ancient splendor of Babylon, it is so well known. It was one of the two or three really great cities of the ancient world, and it was the seat of luxury and magnificence such as was to be found almost nowhere else. Its hanging gardens were one of the seven wonders of the world, while its palaces and temples were splendid beyond description. A little idea of its size can be gained from the fact that ancient historians estimate the circumference of its walls to have been from forty-two to fifty-six miles! Its walls were said to be over three hundred feet high and nearly ninety feet thick! The tower of Babel, mentioned in Genesis, even in its ruined state towered high above the surrounding plain, and the various temples and palaces must have presented a wonderful sight in their ancient glory. It was of this city, founded many thousand years before, at the very dawn of history, that the above prophecy was written. Even in the time of Alexander the Great the city was still magnificent, but after that time it gradually sank into decay. At the beginning of the Christian era it seems to have been largely inhabited by Jews, and Roman persecutions gradually reduced the number of these.

2. *The fulfillment of the prophecy.* Today the city presents a true picture of the fulfillment of prophecy. Travelers report that it is absolutely uninhabited, even by Bedouins. There are various superstitions current among the Arabs that prevent them from pitching their

tents there, while the character of the soil impedes the growth of vegetation suitable for the pasturage of flocks. The whole site is a desolate waste, with the caves and holes in the ruins occupied only by wild animals of the desert. Lions, jackals, and various other animals sport among the ruins, and their cries re-echo through the caverns of the ancient palace walls, but human beings are seldom seen in the vicinity. The prophecy might well be written now as a description of the site of Babylon, yet we know that it was written over twenty-five hundred years ago!

But this prophecy becomes still more wonderful when we compare it with the similar prophecy in Jeremiah 51:26: "And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for the foundations; but thou shalt be desolate forever." The stones in the temples and palaces of Babylon were brought from distant countries (there are no stones in the Babylonian plain) and, being imported, were extremely valuable. Most of the buildings of Babylon were of brick, and for twenty centuries the buildings of Babylon have been quarries for brick for the surrounding territory. But nowhere in the surrounding villages can *stones* be found in the houses. Brick is the only material used! The stones of Babylon have all disappeared! The natives have burned them for lime, and thus the prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

3. *The land to be a desolation.* "Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby" (Jer. 51:43). Babylonia was formerly, with its wonderful system of canals, one of the most fertile and populous regions in the world, but now the canals are swamps and the land is barren. The people have long since disappeared, and the nation is a scene of desolation. Notice the difference between the prophecies concerning Babylon and those concerning Egypt. The Babylonian nation was to disappear, and it *has* disappeared. Egypt was to continue a base nation and it *has continued* as a base nation. How did it come to pass that both of these unlikely events happened exactly according to the way in which the prophecy was worded, and that the names were not exchanged? Is there any other explanation save that God spoke through the prophets?

E. Prophecies About Edom

There are four remarkable prophecies about Edom, the land of the descendants of Esau, that have been fulfilled in the Christian era. Edom

was a wealthy and very populous country southeast of the Dead Sea, up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest. Its capital, Petra, was located on the summit of a high and almost inaccessible mountain, with dwellings hewn out of solid rock.⁵

Edom was fertile and highly cultivated, the mountains being terraced almost to the top and made to yield splendid crops. The principal source of wealth, however, was trade. One of the principal caravan routes of the Arabian Peninsula passed through the country, and great fairs were held every year, where enormous quantities of merchandise of all kinds changed hands.

1. *The caravans to cease.* The first of these four prophecies concerned the trade: "I will cut off from it him that passeth through and him that returneth" (Ezek. 35:7). Trade was to cease and the caravans were no more to travel through the country. At the time it was written nothing seemed more improbable of fulfillment than this prophecy, yet today a great silence reigns over the ruins of those old market towns, and the caravan is never seen passing through the country, where formerly thousands of people thronged every year.

2. *The Edomites to become extinct.* The second prophecy concerned the people themselves: "There shall not be any remaining to the house of Esau" (Obad., verse 18). The people were to be wholly destroyed, utterly wiped out. This prophecy likewise seemed most strange, for the people of Edom were almost as numerous as the people of Israel, and the Jews remain today a distinct and separate people. Why should the Edomites wholly disappear while the Jews remained? Yet God's prophecies are certain, and though this prophecy had not been fulfilled even as late as the time of the Crusades, today not even one small tribe can be pointed out as the descendants of Esau!

3. *The land to be desolate.* A still stranger prophecy was that the land itself should be desolate. "Behold I am against thee, O mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against thee, and I will make thee a desolation and an astonishment. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate" (Ezek. 35:3-4). Other lands have had their people cut off but are still inhabited. Why should we not expect that Edom would be the same? The fertility of the land would certainly attract

⁵ My son the Rev. Robert G. Hamilton, a missionary to Maan, Jordan, has shown me a set of beautiful colored slides of Petra and its rock-hewn temples and dwellings, showing clearly the magnificence of the city in the past. It is now believed that most of the rock-hewn houses are Nabataean in origin.

settlers, and it seemed extremely unlikely that this prophecy would be fulfilled. Yet today the cities are deserted and the cliff homes of Edom without human inhabitant. The land has literally become an astonishment.

4. *The limit of the desolation foretold.* But perhaps the most remarkable prophecy of all foretells the very town from which the limit of the desolation was to be set. "I will make it desolate from Teman" (Ezek. 25:13). And strange as it may seem, Teman, or Maan, as it is called today, is still a prosperous town, on the eastern border of Edom, and the only city in all that land that is not deserted! Could any more marvelous fulfillment of prophecy be found than this? Think what small chance a mere man would have of picking out only one city in a whole land that should live down the centuries, while all the other cities shared in the general fate of destruction and desolation! God alone could foretell such a result, and the book which contains such prophecies must be His Book!

F. The Cities of the Philistines

The ancient hereditary enemies of the Israelites were the Philistines, who dwelt along the coast of the Mediterranean, southwest of Judea. In an extremely fertile plain, which produces enormous crops of corn even to the present day, were the five capital cities of the Philistines, of which we will mention particularly Ascalon, Ekron, and Gaza. In Zephaniah 2:5-6 are the words "Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will destroy thee that there shall be no inhabitant. And the sea-coast shall be pastures, with cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks." This prophecy is almost paradoxical, for while in one breath the prophet says the land shall be without inhabitants, in the next he says that it shall be inhabited by shepherds. Yet that is just what has happened. The great plain which formerly was covered with rich and prosperous cities is now uninhabited except for the huts where shepherds have their flocks. The plain has lost little of its fertility, but the people have gone, and the prophecy is literally fulfilled.

1. *Ascalon.* Nowhere in Scripture is there a more striking instance of the fulfillment of prophecy than in the contrasted predictions in regard to the three cities of Ascalon, Ekron, and Gaza. Zephaniah 2:4-7 says,

"For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation. . . . And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed their flocks there upon; . . . for Jehovah their God will visit them, and bring back their captivity." According to this prophecy, apparently Ascalon was to remain in a semi-habitable condition, though it would be a desolation. The houses were to remain in such a condition that it would be possible to lie down in them at evening. Evidently the city was not to be completely destroyed, though just as evidently it was to be desolate until the time of the ingathering of the remnant of Israel. The present condition of the city shows the prophecy strikingly fulfilled. There was a Turkish garrison in Ascalon as late as the seventeenth century, but since that time it has been deserted. Portions of the wall with its ruined towers and battlements still remain, though Ascalon alone of all the cities of the plain has walls still standing. The walls of the houses still stand in part, on a site now completely deserted (even those who have orchards and gardens inside the walls do not live there), yet at some future time when the Jews control this Gaza strip it is quite possible that Ascalon may be built once more on its ancient site.

2. *Ekron*. Of Ekron it is said, "Ekron shall be rooted up" (Zeph. 2:4). Nothing could be a better description of the city of Ekron at the present time than this. Around the small village which stands on the site of ancient Ekron there are no mounds such as mark the sites of other ancient cities. The whole city has literally been rooted up. Only plowed fields mark its site, and now and then the plowman roots out the stone of a hand-mill or of an ancient cistern to show that once a city stood here. The prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Ekron has been rooted up.

3. *Gaza*. Zephaniah 2:4 says, "Gaza shall be forsaken," and Jeremiah 47:5 says, "Baldness is come upon Gaza." The present town of Gaza has a population of over fifteen thousand, so for many years it was supposed that this prophecy had not yet been fulfilled. "But meanwhile the prophecies had been so fully accomplished that the ancient Gaza could lift no protest against the mistake that was being made. The modern town is not built, as Dr. Keith afterwards discovered, on the site of the old, and is not therefore the subject of the prophecies. The great Gaza of the Philistines lay two miles nearer the shore, and is now a series of sandhills, covered with minute but manifold remains. It is so forsaken that there is not a single hut resting upon its site. It is so bald that

neither pillar nor standing stone marks the place where the city stood, nor is there a single blade of grass on which the weary eye can rest.”⁶

4. *Comparison of the three cities.* The marvel of these three prophecies does not become apparent until we attempt to exchange the three prophecies one for another. The prophecy of “Ashkalon, desolate and tenantless, awaiting a day of restoration when it may receive wanderers to its shelter, can be applied to neither Ekron nor Gaza. Gaza, though forsaken and bald, has not been rooted up. Its mounds remain, bald though they are. . . . Only of Ekron does that briefest but truest of all possible descriptions apply—it alone has been ‘rooted up.’”⁷ What shall we say of a book that so exactly foresees the condition of cities twenty-five hundred years in advance? Can such a book be other than it claims to be, the Word of God?

G. *The Jews*

The prophecies about the Jews are too well known, and their fulfillment is too plain and self-evident, to need to be pointed out. Out of the hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled about the Jews, we call attention to one that is most familiar, yet loses none of its wonder on that account. Leviticus 26:33 contains the prophecy of the dispersion of the Jews: “And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.” This prophecy was conditioned upon their continued disobedience, and today nothing in all Scripture is more remarkable than this and the similar prophecies about the Jews in other books of the Old Testament. Someone has forcefully and truly said that the strongest proof of the truth of Christianity is the Jews. Today there is hardly a land on the face of the earth where the Jew is not a wanderer. The Jews are scattered throughout the nations, persecuted and hunted.

Since the first edition of this book was published in 1927, the greatest persecution of the Jews of all time took place, during the Second World War, under the insane Hitler and Adolf Eichmann. The nation of Israel has been established in Palestine. Many people have felt that the prophecies of the return of the Jews are being fulfilled. This hardly seems possible since they have not come back in belief in Christ as their Messiah, and the majority of the living Jews are still scattered among the nations.

⁶ Urquhart, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁷ *Ibid.*

The strangeness of the prophecy in Leviticus 16:33 still remains. Other nations were destroyed, and in no case where the people were plucked up from the land did they continue to be a people separate from other races. Either they were totally destroyed, as were the Edomites, or they remained in their land a base people, as did the Egyptians, or they were absorbed in other races, as were the numerous nations of those lands. At any rate, what chance was there that, after being expelled bodily from their land, they would continue to be a separate and distinct people?

Yet that was the prophecy, and that they are to the present day. Even the Zionist movement, which brought about the present nation of Israel, has changed materially since the war. Many Jews have gone to Israel, but that nation is surrounded by enemies, and the people have to live in an armed camp, with the constant possibility of national destruction facing them all the time.

According to that prophecy the cities of the land should be a waste and the land a desolation. Palestine today is still a land of ruins. In almost no other country are the ruins of cities and villages so numerous. The land that formerly supported so many people is now barren and capable of supporting a mere fraction of its former population. In Matthew 11:23 the doom of Capernaum is pronounced by Jesus, and today even the site of the city cannot be determined with any certainty. Samaria was to become only a mere heap of the fields, its stones were to be poured down into the valley, and its foundations were to be uncovered (Mic. 1:5-6). Today the top of the hill where Samaria stood is a cultivated field, the foundations of the columns marking the place where the palaces and mansions stood. At the foot of the hill, in the valley, lie the foundation stones of the city, thus literally fulfilling the prophecy.

In Jerusalem the prophecy that Mount Zion should be plowed as a field (Mic. 3:12), and that the temple should never be rebuilt until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, has likewise come to pass, for though the Dome of the Rock (the Mosque of Omar) stands on a portion of the temple site, another portion is under cultivation, with olive trees planted upon it. The story of the Roman Emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the temple, and the abandonment of the attempt because of alleged miraculous interference with the workmen, is too well known to need repetition. At any rate the prophecy in Luke 21:24 still remains a picture of the condition of the land to the present time.

At present the nation of Israel controls the new city and a small portion of the old, but the temple site is under the control of Jordan, and never since the prophecy was uttered has the Jew been a ruler in Jerusalem proper. And the temple has never been rebuilt!

II. CONCLUSION

But why continue to point out fulfilled prophecies when sufficient have been shown to establish the fact that we set out to prove? If a man can read the prophecies cited above and then look at the pictures of the cities and lands referred to in the prophecies and still be unconvinced that the Book which contains such things is the Word of God, a thousand more similarly fulfilled prophecies would likewise not convince him of this fact! Remember that in the instances quoted above it is possible to see the fulfillment of these prophecies today! It is not necessary to take someone else's word for their fulfillment at some time in the past. With the Bible in one hand and a field glass in the other, one can go to these lands today and see with one's own eyes the fulfillment of the prophecies! In the face of such facts, we are justified with Jesus in saying to the doubting Thomases of the present day: "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless but believing"! In the lands of the Bible we can almost place our fingers into the nail-prints of prophecy, and our hands into the spear holes of their fulfillment! We can be as certain that God spoke those words of the prophecies as Thomas was that Jesus was standing before him, and in such a case is there any excuse for our not crying out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"?

CHAPTER XIX

THE ARGUMENT FROM CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

I. THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIANS OF ALL AGES

It has been one of the principal aims of our book thus far to establish the fact that the Bible is the Word of God. If the Bible is *true*, and if it is in very truth God's Word, then the conclusion that inevitably follows is that the doctrines taught therein constitute the only *final* and *absolutely true* religion! In other words, if the Bible is the Word of God, Christianity, and the particular type of Christianity which wholly bases its teachings on *all* the doctrines taught in the Bible, is the only *true* religion in the world!

Such a statement does not mean that other religions do not contain any portion of truth, or that certain types of present-day Christianity which do not accept the teachings of the whole Bible or which substitute philosophical theories for the teachings of the Bible do not contain much that is true and good. All that may be freely admitted.

Moreover, it is not claimed that a particular one of the various denominations and sects into which Christendom is divided is the *only* one that teaches the truth. Nor is it claimed that any one denomination teaches *nothing but* the truth. The author believes that the Westminster Confession of Faith is the best expression of the doctrines taught in the Bible, but it is freely admitted that other creeds contain at least the major portion of these same doctrines, and that all the standard creeds of Christendom contain a sufficient amount of the truth to bring salvation to any individual who believes them and lives accordingly. The qualification needs to be added, however, that we cannot be saved if we trust both in Christ and in our good works. Our trust must be put in Christ *alone* if we are to be saved.

Sadly enough, many Christian sects err in their interpretation of what the Bible teaches, but though we admit this, it is nevertheless true that all the great historic creeds of the evangelical branches of the Christian Church agree in the main in their interpretation of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. All agree upon what are the essentials for salvation, and all agree that without faith in the historic Christ of the New Testament salvation is impossible. All agree also that the Bible is the infallible guide of every Christian, and subordinate their creeds to its teachings.

If it could be shown conclusively that any doctrine found in any of the creeds was not taught in the Bible, there is little doubt that that particular church would accept the Bible as the ultimate authority. Therefore what we mean by the statement that the Christianity taught in the Bible is the only final and absolute religion is that the doctrines taught in the Bible—and given there so plainly that no Christian who takes the Bible as an authority would deny them as being taught in the Bible—are the foundations of the Christian religion, and that without belief in *this* Christian religion, centering around belief in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no salvation, either in this world or in the world to come. Necessarily, then, however much truth other religions may have, if they do not center around faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning work *alone*, they do not offer salvation to the human race and must be supplanted by Christianity.

Now if this religion of Christianity is true, we would expect it actually to do what the Bible claims it *will* do, namely, bring to pass certain wonderful changes in the lives of believers. What do we find when we examine the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ?

II. LIVES CHANGED

First, Christianity seems to possess the power of making over the lives of men and women. (Christians claim that this power is that of the Holy Spirit.) Christianity finds a man sunk in moral degradation and sin and changes him into a man honored and respected by all who know him. Christianity takes a Saul bent on the slaughter of the followers of the "Name" and changes him into the Apostle Paul, filled with love for the brethren and a zeal for carrying the gospel to the heathen Gentiles that makes him willing to endure hatred, and persecution, and imprisonment, and stonings, and shipwrecks for the sake of his Master and Saviour. Christianity takes the dissolute rake and

changes him into Augustine, the saint and great theologian. Christianity takes a John Bunyan, a prisoner in an English jail, and makes him into the revered author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, the book that has inspired Christians for two centuries. Christianity takes the bleary-eyed drunkard in the slums of London and changes him into the loving husband and father, giving him victory over temptation and making him a respected and honored citizen of his country. Christianity takes an Auca Indian in the jungle of Ecuador, who took part in the murder of the five martyred missionaries, and who had murdered at least eleven persons, convicts him of his sins, brings him to repentance and faith in Christ, and makes him a new individual. Christianity sends its Wesleys, its Whitefields, its Moodys, its Chapmans, its Billy Sundays, and its Billy Grahams throughout the length and breadth of our lands, preaching the doctrine of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ and winning thousands of converts from sin to sincere belief in Jesus Christ the Saviour of men. Homes are changed from wrangling and discord to honoring Christ as the Head of the household, and love and happiness reign supreme.

III. CHRISTIANITY IN MISSION LANDS

But if you would see the fruits of Christianity in their clearest examples, you must go to mission lands, where the contrast between lives touched by Christ and lives sunk in the depths of heathenism is most evident. In a land like America, where for several generations Christianity has been at its leavening work in human society, the contrast between the lives of Christians and non-Christians is not always so marked as in a mission land, because public opinion and the desire to be respected in the community restrain the non-Christian in many cases from showing his real character. But in a land where there are few if any of the restraints that Christian civilization and Christian public opinion impose, men stand forth in black and white, with their true characters manifest to all. In such a land the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is as marked as the difference between day and night. One has only to look upon the faces of the young wives from Christian homes to see the difference between hope and despair, between happiness and misery, between a life full of joy and peace and a life lived only in stolid endurance. When a dissipated and dissolute scoundrel who treats his wife and children as so many head of cattle changes into a kind father and loving husband; when he discards his

sinful habits and seeks to spend his days winning others to Christ, we know that a power has been at work in the heart of such a one entirely different from natural causes. Christianity works! The fact that Christianity when tested in the crucible of human experience proves to be pure gold is one of the strongest arguments in its support. A religion which has such power to change human lives and to regenerate society is not to be dismissed from our consideration with a shrug and a sneer.

IV. CHRISTIANITY IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In the last analysis the only way in which we can become wholly convinced of the truth of Christianity is to accept Christ as our Saviour and undergo the experience of the Christian life for ourselves. We can study all the convincing proofs of Christianity that there are in the world, and be intellectually persuaded that they are true, and yet not be Christians. There must be an assent of the *will* as well as of the intellect, before we can become real Christians. This means that we must be *willing* to be convinced or we will never reach conviction of the truth of Christianity and will not have our lives changed. On God's side this means that the Holy Spirit must change our hearts before it is possible to believe, but viewed from our angle, it means that there must be a surrender of the will before there can be conviction of the truth of Christianity. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17). This is the law of the kingdom of heaven—the law of the Christian life. It is the great principle that explains why men of great intellectual power, in the face of the most convincing facts and logic, can yet withstand the evidence and arguments and reject Christianity. No man who is not willing to place his life in the hands of the lowly Galilean will ever be able to accept Christianity. It means the giving up of intellectual pride and the confession of intellectual error. It means the admission that we have sinned and the determination with the help of the Holy Spirit to cleanse our hearts from sin and begin a life in obedience to the will of God.

For many, like the rich young ruler in the Gospels, it means giving up things which we hold almost dearer than life itself. It means possibly the willingness to sacrifice ambition, power, riches, or even family for the sake of the service of the One who loved us and gave His life for us on the cross. Some of us are not willing to make such a sacrifice. But one who is not willing to count all things but refuse for

the love of Christ cannot expect to be a true follower of Christ or to reach a condition of certainty of mind and soul as to the truth of Christianity.

For anyone who is willing to make this venture of faith, however, to "taste and see" for himself whether or not the waters of the River of Life are sweet or bitter, there is the promise that he shall *know* whether the doctrine is of God or of man. Those of us who have drunk of the water from that River, and have eaten of the Bread that Christ gives, would not exchange that new life for anything in the whole world. We *know* that our Redeemer *liveth* and that he maketh intercession for us at the Throne of Grace.

When we reach the condition of the man at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration who said, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" then our Master and Teacher, our Saviour and Lord, our Redeemer and Creator, takes us by the hand and leads us into the Way of Life, beside the "still waters," and into "green pastures," where we "shall not want"! And then as peace and joy steal into our souls, and as we bask in the sunlight of his smile, there comes a new light to our minds, throwing the brilliant searchlight of knowledge over the cold facts and arguments that before seemed so lifeless and unconvincing, and there comes to our hearts the conviction that never can be shaken, that God *hath* spoken, that the Bible *is* the Word of God, and that Christianity *is* the only true religion, and we cry out with the Samaritans who came with the woman of Samaria to Jesus at the well, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Saviour of the world!"

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